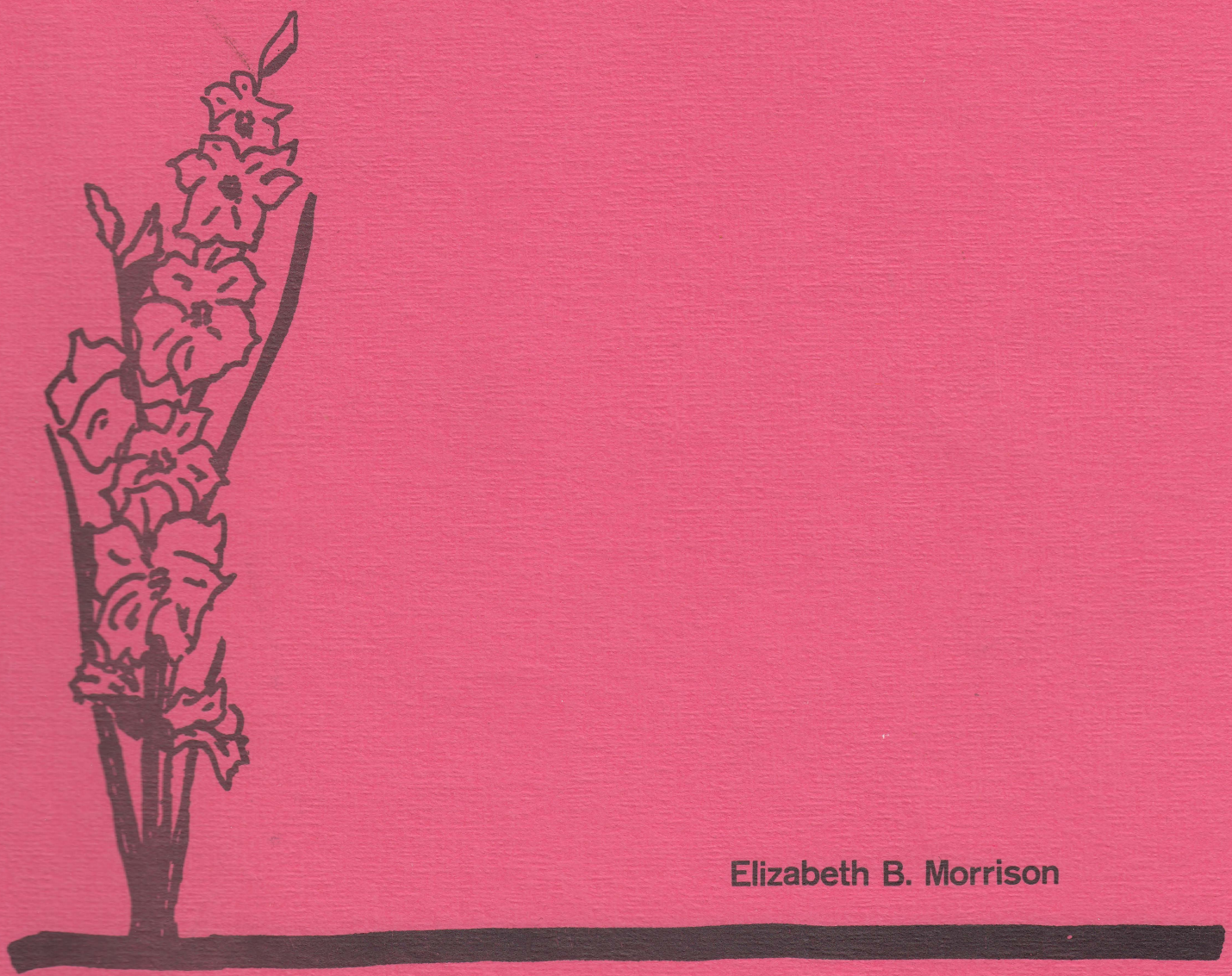
memories

of

Momence Township

1776 1976



Elizabeth B. Morrison

Introduction

To write a history of a township is an awesome task; to put together a collection of memories is almost as frightening. Without the help of many people it could not have been done. For all those gracious people who came to my aid with books, documents, newspapers, pictures and generous amounts of time I am truly grateful. They are all acknowledged at the end of the report, for they are as important as the books and articles which I read. It is regrettable that there are many whom, for lack of time I did not see; they, too, could have added much of interest.

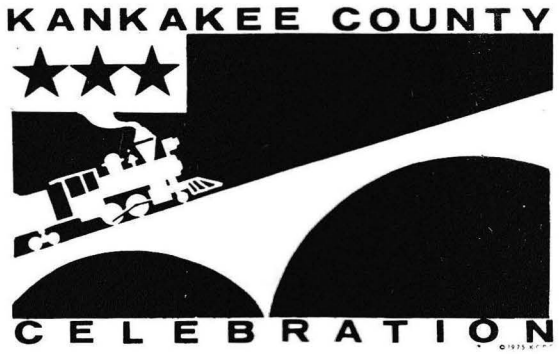
There are inaccuracies in this writing, for historians do not always agree and people's memories differ. There are omissions caused by lack of time, or by a judgement made on what to include and what to leave out. I hope that the inaccuracies are not too great, and that the omissions are forgivable.

Current problems are not discussed, for this is a collection of memories. City and township residents are well aware of such problems as river pollution and drainage, particularly at the extreme western edge of the township. Their solutions will be the subject of a historian's report in the year 2076.

Momence, Illinois–1976 Elizabeth B. Morrison

Contents

Introduction i
I Indians Fur Traders Pioneers 1
II A Town A County A Township 8
III People and Places 13
IV Pleasures and Pastimes 24
V Disputes and Discussions 28
VI From the Model "T" to Apollo 17 33
VII From THE-A-KI-KI to Kankakee 41
Bibliography 52



This is the symbol for Kankakee County's Bicentennial celebration. The outline is of the county itself inset over the outline of the State of Illinois. The three stars stand for county, state, and nation; the double arch of the bridge spans the two rivers (Kankakee - Iroquois) which figured so significantly in the development of the county. The 1850 locomotive climbing a sharp grade indicates the forward and upward growth of the area, and the influence of all of the county's railroads in that endeavor.

WAIVER

In putting together this history of Momence Township many things have been encountered that do not agree. The writers have done their best to check on details, but it has not always been possible to completely verify them. Any errors or mis-statements are unintentional.

Spelling is generally as we have found it, and spellings vary from document to newspaper items, to family usage as we find it today.

Census information is known in some cases to be in error, but that is the way it was recorded by the census takers.

Stories that are handed down through the years grow or fade in the telling. We hope you will enjoy the information, but always keep in mind that in reality it may have been a little different.

Memories is a project of the Kankakee Bicentennial Commission.

I Indians Fur Traders Pioneers

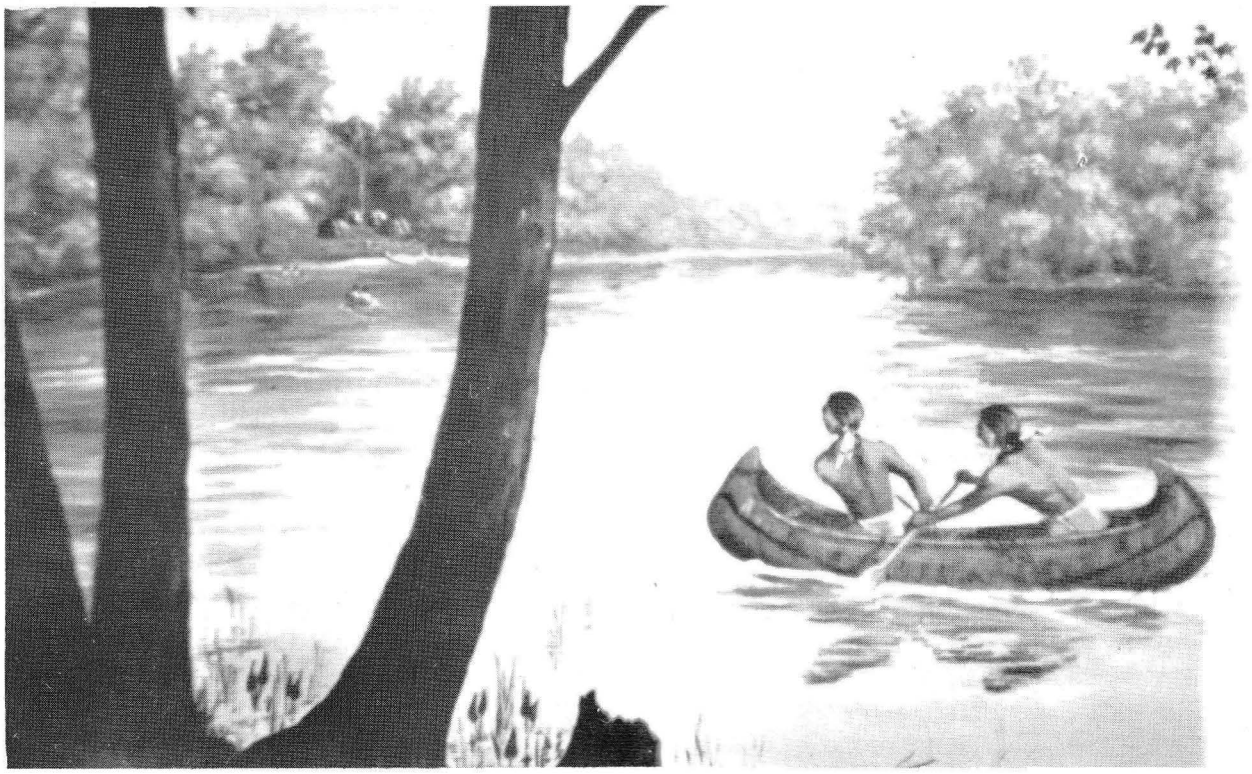
1976 is a very special year. It not only marks the beginning of the last quarter of the twentieth century, it is the two hundredth birthday of the United States of America. All across the nation there is remembering as each community retells the story of its beginnings and rediscovers its roots. For all Americans, but especially for the citizens of Momence township, it is hoped that this look backwards will renew their pride in their heritage and their faith in themselves and their future.

Yet, where or what, exactly, are the beginnings? History is, in reality, a chain of events–each link built upon a previous event, or link. Perhaps one might start with the link called "The Illinois Country". Long before there was a United States of America the "Illinois Country" was well known and well defined. It was peopled by numerous groups of Indians: the Illinois on both sides of the Illinois river, the Piankeshaws to the east, into present state of Indiana, and the Miamis to the northeast.

French explorers were the first Europeans to visit this "Country of the Illinois"; the first dwellings were their forts, trading posts and missions. During the year 1679 Robert Cavelier Sieur de La Salle, with his companions Tonty and Father Hennepin, followed the southern tip of Lake Michigan eastward to the St. Joseph river. They ascended this river to a point near present day South Bend, Indiana. There they crossed the marshy swamp lands to the headwaters of the Kankakee river, descending it to the Illinois river. La Salle and his voyageurs were, thus, the first Europeans to have traveled "our" river and seen "our" township. The Illinois country was French territory until 1763 when, by the Treaty of Paris, it was ceded to the British. British occupation ended with the American Revolution, almost one hundred years after La Salle's trip down the Kankakee river.

In 1779 the congress of a new nation, the United States of America, requested that states having claims on western lands, either by grant, conquest, or cession by Indians, relinquish those claims to the federal government. Thus the "Country of the Illinois" became the Northwest Territory. On May 7, 1800 the Northwest Territory was divided into the Indiana Territory (western portion) and the Ohio Territory; during the year 1809 the Indiana Territory was divided, the western portion becoming the Illinois Territory. In 1818 the state of Illinois became the twenty-first state admitted to the union.

This was frontier land; the process of migration and settlement followed the pattern that a century had made familiar. First came the trappers and traders, isolated men at home in the wilderness, capable of dealing both with human and animal habitants on equal terms. One such man was Noel LeVasseur. When only seventeen, unhappy on the family farm in the province of Quebec, he decided to "seek his fortune" elsewhere. In May 1817, along with some forty other youngsters and the fur trader Roche Blave, he set out for the West to trade with the Indians. At Mackinac the group found a post of Astor's American Fur Company, and were put to work. These young Frenchmen were the ones was manned the "batteaux", with trade goods for the Indians, who hauled the furs on their backs, who traveled unknown trails, who often went hungry. It was labor often dangerous, always difficult.



The river as it must have looked to de La Salle and later to Gurdon Hubbard. (A painting by Marilyn Ostrow)

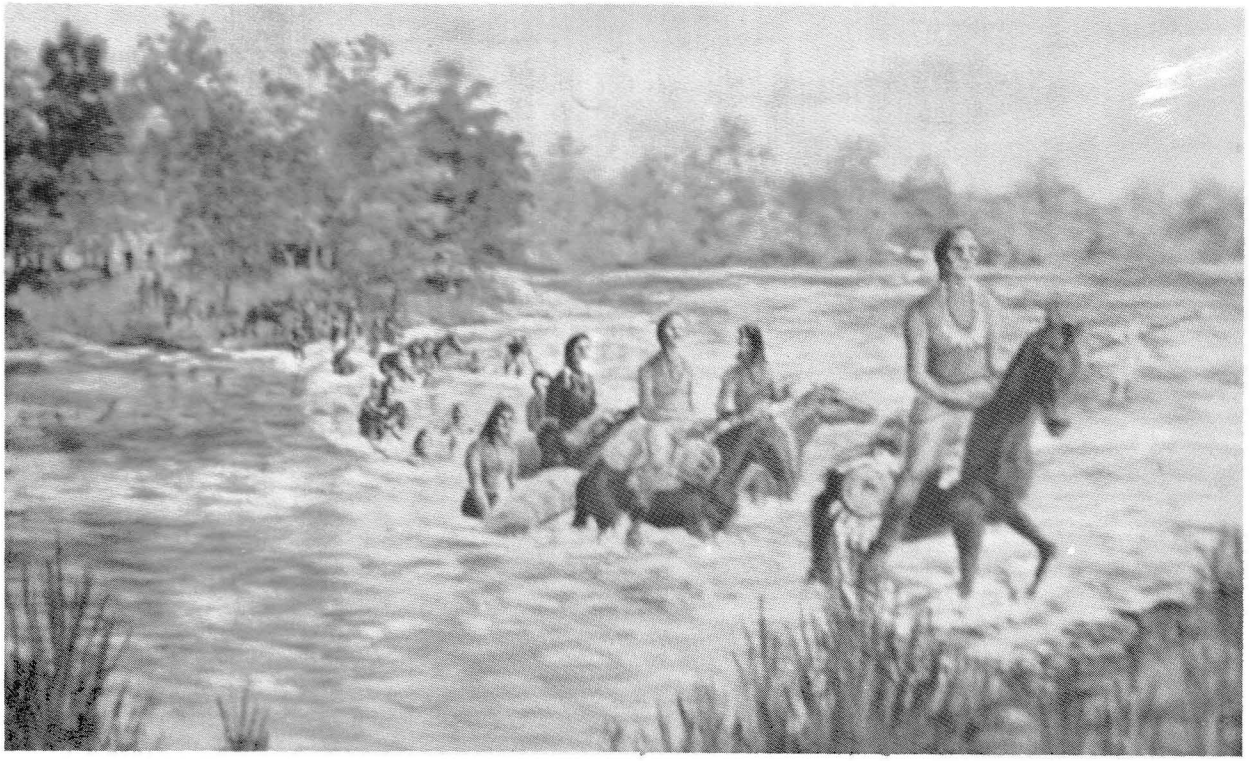
One summer LeVasseur met Gurdon Hubbard at Mackinac. Hubbard was another "fortune seeker", young in years but old in experience, already in a position of responsibility with the American Fur Company and one of the "Illinois Brigade". LeVasseur became one of Hubbard's voyageurs, later his good friend and business partner. In 1821 Hubbard with his voyageurs, set out from Chicago following the route that LaSalle had followed over a century earlier. With the aid of Indians they made the portage from the St. Joseph river across swampy marsh lands to the river that today we call the Kankakee. In 1699 St. Cosme called it the "River The-a-li-ke"; in 1712 Father Marest called it "Han-ki-ki"; Charlevoix wrote of it as "Ki-a-ki-ki" which he said was corrupted from "The-a-ki-ki"; in 1812, in a report to the governor, it was called "Quin-que-que" (undoubtedly a French spelling of an Indian pronunciation). It is supposed that "Kankakee" is an Americanized spelling of the French name—a name to which historians have given various meanings: wolf, swamp, wonderful land. Hubbard, recalling his first impression of the Kankakee valley said, "You are citizens of the most beautiful portions of our grand state". The aborigines so considered it; they designated it the "Wonderful Land, Wonderful River, Wonderful Home". Indians whose villages were on the banks of your river always, in naming their residence, would say "Ti-yar-ack-nauk"– "wonderful land home". I can never forget my first impressions of river, woods and lands so delightfully interspersed."

During the year 1822 Hubbard established a track, or trace as it was often called, from his post at Bunkum (present day Iroquois) south well beyond Danville and north to Chicago. The Indians with whom he traded were the Pottowatomi, described by early French missionaries as hunters and fishers of war-like bearing living north of Lake Huron, then later along the coast of Lake Michigan. Early in the eighteenth century they had migrated to northern Indiana and northern Illinois. The men hunted and fished, the women raised the crops: corn, beans, squash, melons. There were several of their villages in the Kankakee valley; Chief Yellowhead's village near Sherburnville, Wais-kuks near Waldron, She-mor-gar or Soldier's village, and the largest, Shawanassee's village at Rock Creek. These Pottowatomi were excellent trappers, no longer war-like, but acustomed to the white man and his trade goods: guns, blankets, copper pots, clothing and whiskey. Although they had lived in the Kankakee valley just a little over one

hundred years, it was indeed their wonderful land. Beaver Lake and the marshes eastward were natural fish hatcheries; water fowl and food animals were plentiful and crops grew well. Yet they were persuaded to give it up. President Jackson needed more frontier land for the the pioneer families; he wanted the nation to grow westward. Since the Indians were in the way he requested Congress to pass an Indian Removal Act authorizing treaties with the Indians for their land, and resettling them on reservations west of the Mississippi. At Tippecanoe, Indiana, in 1832, the Pottowatomi sold their lands in what is now Kankakee county to the United States government. Certain choice land was reserved for chiefs or their families, principally in the area that is now Kankakee and Bourbonnais–reservations ranging from 320 to 3200 acres in size. However, these Indians chose to sell their reservation and go with their people to Iowa. The upheaval took place gradually, a few groups at a time. By 1838 almost all the Pottowatomi had left their "wonderful land home".

According to the pattern of settlement, after the trails were defined the pioneer families followed–hardy men and women who wrested a living from the land, and whose children grew tough in the struggle to survive. In their wake moved the agents of civilization–land speculators, lawyers, officials and shopkeepers who established the links that drew the frontier close to the rest of the world.

Thus it was in Momence township. The Hubbard Trace from Danville to Chicago was well defined and well traveled. The finest and most practical ford of the river was a spot about a mile above the present bridge at Momence. The river was shallow, the bed of the river consisted of large flat stones making a fairly smooth road. It became known as the Upper Crossing because there were two other fords some five hundred yards apart about a mile downstream called the Lower Crossing. These fords were the only practicable crossings for almost the length of the river; all travel north and south converged at these spots; this was the route for emigration and trade from western Indiana and

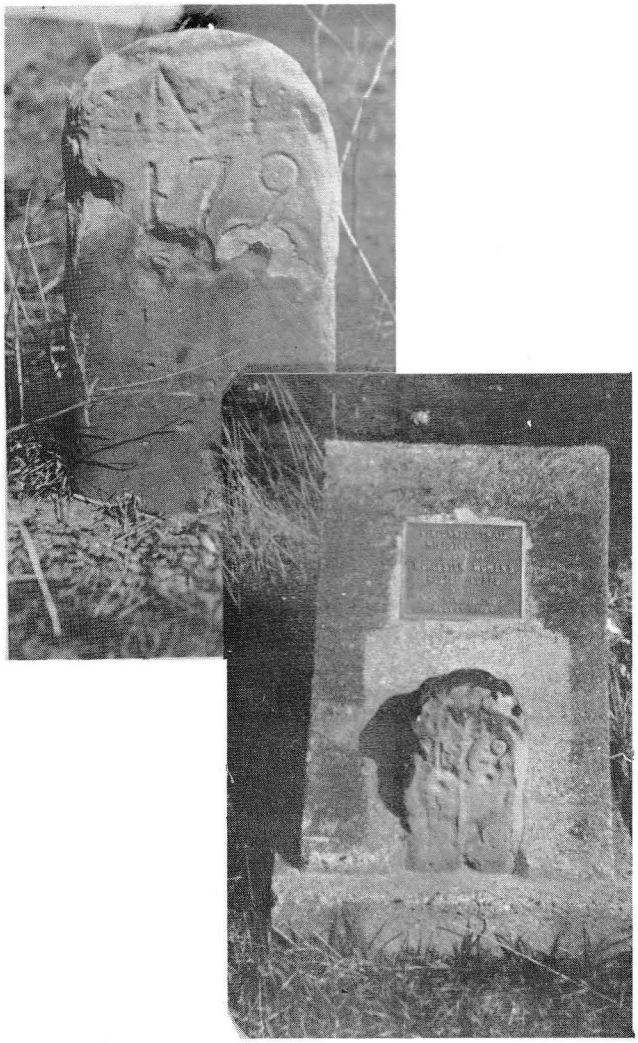


A painting by local artist Marilyn Ostrow, of the Pottowatomi departure from the Kankakee valley. Letourneau wrote that reliable pioneers had described it as a heart rending experience. "The squaws wrung their hands and tore their hair; bitter tears fell in the furrows of dark chieftain faces; little children felt the sob of premonitory desolation rising in their throats. They had bartered their lands, their peace of mind, the heritage of the little ones for gold, and over their dull consciousness swept the gripping chill of a regretted and unalterable fate."

southern Illinois to Chicago.

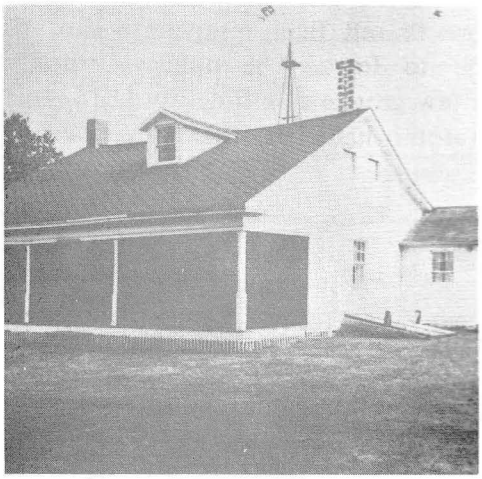
Upper Crossing, directly on Hubbard's trail attracted the first settlers. In 1833 William Lacy put up a log cabin on the north side of the river at the crossing; the next year Robert Hill put a cabin on the south side of the river and opened a tavern. (At that time tavern meant hotel.)

1834 was also the year that the state put in a mile-stone marked road from Vincennes to Chicago—a road that followed Hubbard's trail from Danville to Chicago. In a letter Hubbard wrote, "The legislature of Illinois caused a state road to be laid out in 1834, designated by mile-stones, from Vincennes to Chicago. The commisioners who located it and planted the stones tried hard, so they informed me, to get a straight line, and better ground than the Hubbard trail, but were forced with slight deviations to use my old track . . . "

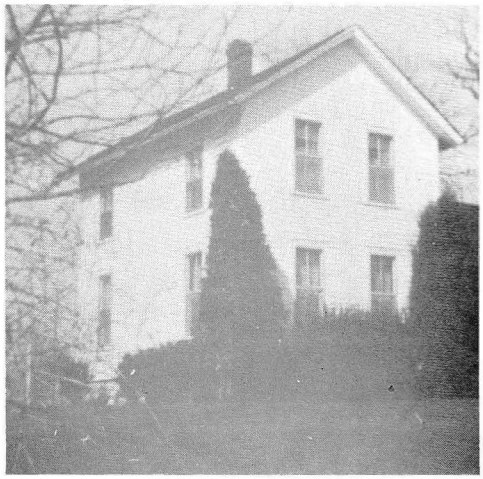


Milestone 179 as it looked in 1909. Today, showing the ravages of vandalism and weather, it is set in concrete—a project of the Worcester Women's Relief Corps. It is almost directly across the road from the William Nichols home.

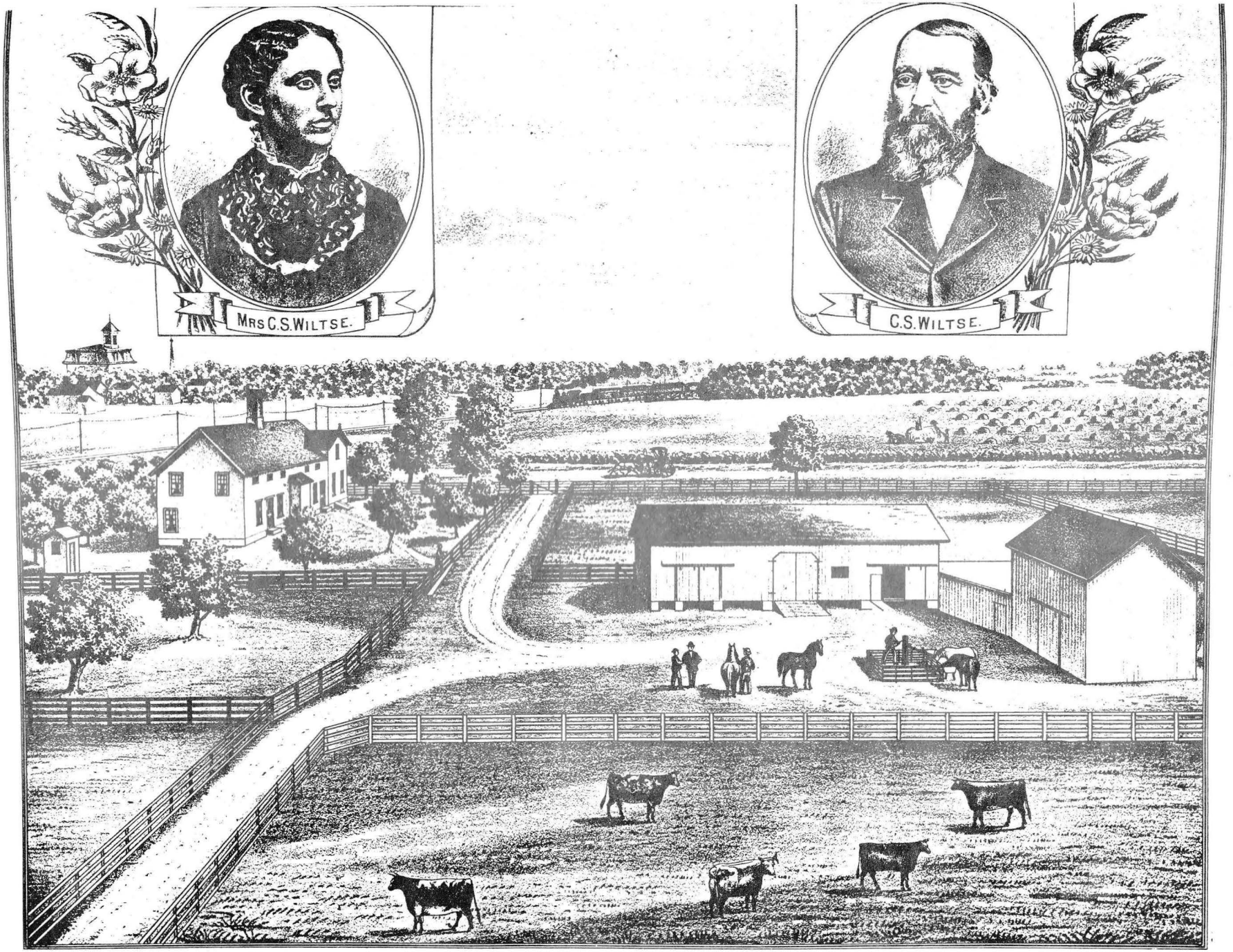
The William Nichols home, on the Hubbard Trail, is one of the oldest homes still standing in the county.



The Graham farmhouse, another of the oldest in the county is situated on a high wooded hill overlooking the 400 acres of the Graham farm.



The Metcalf farmhouse, on the north bank of the Upper Crossing. The great-grandchildren of Silas tell of finding timbers from the old bridges when they played,as children, in the river.



RESIDENCE OF C.S. WILTSE, BREEDER OF HEAVY HORSES, MOMENCE, KANKAKEE CO. ILL.

C. S. Wiltse, as enterprising a farmer as W. B. Hess, came to the township in 1843. This picture is from the 1883 Atlas.

Three years later (1837) William Nichols settled near the trail on the north side of the river. The only mile-stone remaining of the state road, number 179 (number of miles from Vincennes) is still to be seen across the road from the Nichols home, one of the oldest houses still standing in Kankakee county. In 1838 James Graham settled near William Nichols and Silas Metcalf settled on the land where Lacy had put up a cabin just four years earlier. In 1839 Walter B. Hess arrived from Canada and settled a few miles up river from the Crossing. He acquired a farm of 40 acres which he gradually increased until he owned some 560 acres. He is an example of the sturdy hard working pioneer farmer of Momence township, for the land, covered with tall prairie grasses had to be cultivated by hand. It was a back breaking job that was accomplished a few acres at a time. As W. W. Parish, Sr. recorded in his diary, "Our tools were all hand made and we made them. They consisted of a wooden plow, a wooden drag and a hand sickle".

A monument to the Hess family, on Highway 114 several miles east of Momence.

By 1845 there was a settlement of about a dozen families at the Crossing, fairly evenly divided between the north and the south sides of the river. Robert Hill's tavern was so well known that the crossing was often called Hill's Crossing. His business outgrew the log cabin and, in 1840, he built a larger house—a frame house whose finishing lumber was hauled from Chicago by wagon. Two years later a bridge was built at the crossing site. The eldest daughter of James Graham remembered watching the building of the bridge. All the settlers came to help; meals and generous amounts of whiskey were served at Hill's place. Unfortunately ice jams destroyed the bridge some three or four years later. It was rebuilt only to be destroyed again in 1849.

At the same time that a settlement was developing at the Upper Crossing, another was growing at the Lower Crossing. Asher Sargeant built a log cabin—a large double cabin—on the north side of the river some time in 1834. He had a store in a part of the cabin, and two years later, when A. S. Vail and the Beebes came, a room of his cabin was used as a school. Orson Beebe and A. S. Vail built a cabin on the south side of the river. Orson's sister Lorraine, the settlement's first teacher, recalled, "I taught school during the winter of 1837 in Asher Sargeant's house. The two children of the Sargeants were all the scholars I had. I only taught three hours a day when I could cross the river on the ice. My sister, who married Mr. Vail, and myself kept house for my brother Orson and Mr. Vail at their house on the south side of the river." The next year she taught in the empty Lacy cabin at the Metcalf place. She was able to borrow a boat and rowed herself as well as the south side children to the school each day.

Algernon Sidney Vail, at the age of ninety-six, a tall, erect man whose firm handshake belied his years, recalled those first years of the settlement. "In 1836", he said, "I came West with Mr. Hardin Beebe and his family. They settled on a claim later known as Beebe's Grove, near what is now Crete, Illinois. In October of that year I made a trip to Chicago. It was then a crude looking place. It was not an unusual thing to see a team stuck in the mud on Lake Street. I could have purchased lots on this street for twenty or twenty-five dollars each, while on State Street lots could have been had for a song. Had I acted upon my own judgement I should certainly have secured some of the ground in the business section of the city instead of the claim of 160 acres which I purchased here for $2200.

In 1837, I married Miss Anna Beebe, and when we settled on our claim there were just two shanties where Momence now stands. The next year (1838) I drew my wheat to Chicago with an ox team and sold it for 37½ cents per bushel. It took three days to make the trip. In those days neighbors were few, and in our little colony reciprocity was a prominent plank in our community platform. Each had a desire for the common good of all.

When our little community consisted of six families, the need of school advantages was keenly felt, and I have always held in grateful remembrance my humble effort to provide for this necessity by erecting a little building which was the first frame schoolhouse in Kankakee county. This same building is now the kitchen part of our home, for, after being used for five years for school purposes, it was outgrown and gave place to a larger building."

He recalled that red and black raspberries, grapes and wild turnip grew along the river, brought undoubtedly by the French voyageurs and distributed among the Indians. These Indians were converts and buried their dead, marking the graves with rude crosses. He also recalled finding the body of an Indian buried above ground in a sitting position in a little log hut on an island east of town, as Bloom had described the burial of Chief Shawanassee.

Mr. Vail was the first postmaster of the community. He had served as supervisor and grand juror. At 96 he was, and had been for twenty years, justice of the peace. Momence people, young, middle-aged and old, for miles around came to Uncle Algernon to be married, firmly believing that "a nuptial knot could be more cleverly and permanently tied by him". At 96 he was truly a patriarch of Momence.

It was the year after "Sid" Vail came to the settlement that Asher Sargeant built a dam on the north fork of the river and set up a sawmill.A year later (1838) he put in a dam on Trim creek one and one-half miles east of the town (on the farm later owned by J. H. Nichols) and built a grist mill. No longer was it necessary for the settlers to go as far as Wilmington or Lafayette to have their grain ground.

W. W. Parish, Sr. came to the Lower Crossing in 1840 when choice farm land was selling for $1.25 per acre, wheat delivered in Chicago brought 35 cents a bushel, corn and oats 10 cents a bushel, and dressed pork $1.50 per hundred. Although most of the Pottawatomi had left, Mr. Parish remembered that when he came there were still Indians occupying teepees along the river. The Grahams at Upper Crossing recalled that each spring and summer there were Indians who came to visit them and to sell bead work or buck-skin apparel that they had made during the winter. In particular, there was old Joe Barbee. His place was known as Indian Garden (a little east of the present Garden of Eden subdivision) where he lived with his wife and two daughters. He was remembered as a working Indian who grew vegetables and fruit—an Indian with a white man's name.

Thus Momence, one of the oldest towns in northeastern Illinois began as a river settlement that existed for years without a name. It was, said Bert Burroughs, a sort of rallying point. Here came the coureurs de voyage from Canada, southern pioneers, sturdy settlers from the Wabash and Yankees from the East. Mr. Parish remembered that often there were as many as one hundred wagons at a time camped around the ford. "It was a wide open river town", wrote a Momence editor, "with gambling, profanity and dissipation in full sway" The marshes to the east attracted not only hunters but criminals. The islands were difficult to reach and afforded a safe haven for all kinds of wrong-doers. The editor continued, "At that time (1838) the old Indian chief Bourbonnais was living in his double log cabin which stood almost exactly where our court house now stands; old Min-e-maung (Yellowhead) in his cabin on the farm of J. P. Stratton about four and one-half miles east of Momence, old Joe Barbee up the river at what is known as Blue Grass. The dried corpse of an Indian was in a rude birch bark hammock hanging in a large tree on Miller's Island, and the Indian villages near the present sites of Waldron and Altorf were the only villages in the county. Along the river were the cabins of frontiersmen engaged in hunting, trapping and cutting and rafting logs, and in the neighborhood of Beaver Lake counterfeiters, gamblers, horse thieves and all manner of outlaws were in hiding. Schools were kept in log cabins devoid of what now we think would be indispensable. Often one or two books would have to suffice for the whole school, the system of instruction being after the fashion of the old Greeks, the teacher again and again rehearsing a lesson until the pupil learned it."

II A Town A County A Township

By 1841 the little community was large enough for a postoffice, and was named Lorraine in honor of the first teacher, Lorraine Beebe. The postoffice was in the home of Postmaster A. S. Vail at Lower Crossing. He was a Whig, however, and soon lost this political job to a Democrat, David Lynds. Since Dr. Lynds was the husband of Lorraine Beebe, the name of the postoffice was not changed–just its location–to Lynds' home at Upper Crossing.

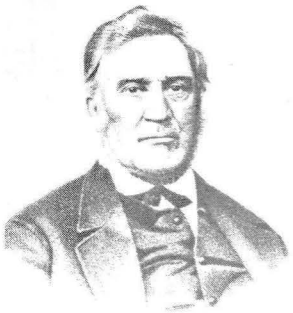
The land on which the Lower Crossing settlement grew was the reservation of the Indian princess Ja-neir, her husband, and his two brothers Wa-be-ga and Saw-grets. The three brothers were the sons of a French trader Pierre Moran and his Indian wife. Ja-neir's husband has been called, by various historians, Mo-mentz, Momence, Mo-mess or Mo-ness. Mr. Vail, who knew him well insisted that his name was Mo-ness. In 1843 Dr. Hiram Todd acquired this land bringing his holdings in Kankakee county to 8,000 acres. He had the land surveyed, a town platted and recorded in the Will county court house in Joliet in 1846. It was a town of about twelve blocks, bound on the north by Fourth Street, on the east by Maple Street, on the west by Range Street and on the south by the river. There were six or eight houses within the town limits and the flouring mills of Todd and Chatfield. Mrs. Chatfield recalled that one evening at Todds they were discussing a name for the town. Dr. Todd proposed two names, Momence and Sawgrets. Mrs. Chatfield suggested Toddsville. After some discussion they chose the name Momence. Soon afterward the townsite was bought by James Mix, W. A. Chatfield and John Strunk as a real estate venture.

Isaac Olds wrote in a letter, "In 1845 I built the first bridge over the north channel of the river from the foot of Range Street to the island. The one over the south branch was built by John Force and was put in by subscription. I bought the first lot sold in the town for which I paid the sum of $30."

Milan O. Clarke, who later published the *Momence Reporter*, came to Momence in the spring of 1846 to join his brother, Bela. He wrote to his New York relatives, "We have the best country, the best land, and right here before long will be a place of importance. We have water privileges and the canal will come within thirty miles of us. Even now, with our market at Chicago fifty miles away we do as well as Naples as we can get things very cheap there."

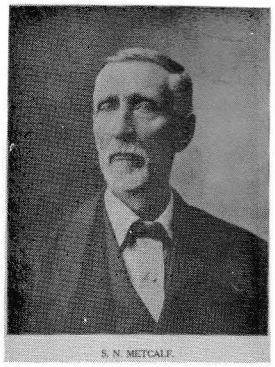
JOHN STRUNK

ALGERNON S. VAIL

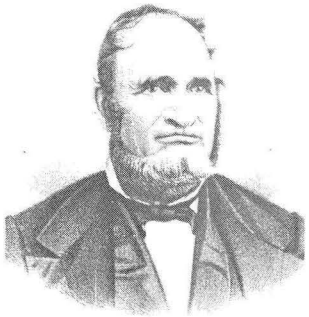


W. A. CHATFIELD

M. O. CLARK



S. N. METCALF

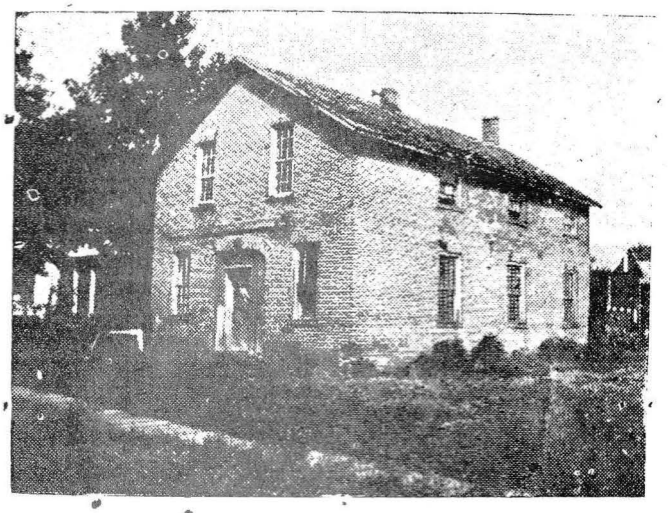


JUDGE ORSON BEEBE

Early settlers, *from the 1883 Atlas*

By 1851 there was quite a business center on River Street; three general stores, a drug store, a tin shop, a blacksmith shop and two hotels. The three mills, a grist mill, a saw mill and a carding mill were the life of the town since they brought in trade for the stores. Chauncey and Albert Chipman had built a brick school on Locust between 3rd & 4th streets. The ice jams of a particularly cold winter took out the bridges in the late forties (no one remembered exactly when) and Hill's bridge went down in the spring of '49. During the summer, when the river was fordable, one could cross at Momence or at Hill's; at other times it was necessary to use the ferry at Momence. Sometime in 1852 the business men of the town formed the Momence Bridge Company and sold stock to finance the building of new bridges. The project was completed the next year and a house was built on the west tip of the island, between the bridges, for the toll collector. The toll for a team crossing was 15 cents, 10 cents for a single horse, and 5 cents to walk across. One could get a reduced rate by purchasing a quantity of tickets at a time.

First Brick Schoolhouse



First brick schoolhouse ever built in Momence. It was located on Locust St. where the Wilbur King residence is today.

From the Momence Press-Reporter, July 1939.

Perhaps it was the new toll bridges, perhaps the new flouring mill that John Strunk built on the island, or perhaps the new church congregations—the few Methodists who had met at Nichols farm formed a congregation in 1844 and met at the new brick school; the Baptist congregation, organized in 1851, built a church the next year. Whatever the reason, the little Momence settlement continued to grow while the community at Upper Crossing began to disappear. Hakestraw's dram shop, Glover's store, Green's gunshop, the blacksmith, one by one they moved down river to Momence. Only Hill's tavern was left. In the spring of 1850 there was a Grand Ball at the tavern in honor of Hill's son Sam, Philip Worchester and a dozen other men who would soon be leaving for the California gold fields. It was the tavern's last celebration. Three years later, after the death of Robert Hill, the building was moved to the corner of River and Market Streets where it became a home.

New families moving to the community, new businesses being formed as well as jury duty made the day long trips to the county seats intolerable. There were two of them, for the river was a dividing line. Those living on the north side were in Will county, formed from Cook in 1836, whose county seat was Joliet; those living on the south side were in Iroquois county, formed in 1833, whose county seat was Middleport (near present day Watseka). The diary of William Parish, Sr. says, "It was a day's journey to the Middleport county seat. Lawyers from Joliet would ride horseback to Middleport to try their cases, and Iroquois county lawyers would ride horseback to Joliet to try their cases." He as well as other townspeople frequently served as jurors in the circuit court, making the long trip to one county seat or the other. By 1850 the Vails, Perrys, Worchesters and Beebes with settlers from other communities along the river, decided that they needed their own county and county seat. Accordingly, petitions were sent to the state legislature requesting a new county to be taken from both Will and Iroquois. The legislature ordered an election to be held in April, 1851, requiring a majority vote from both counties. Will county had no objections; Iroquois objected vigorously; its vote was against the formation of a new county. Thus the whole process of petitions and elections had to be repeated. In the elections of 1853 both counties had majority votes for the new county. Although there was strong evidence of fraud in the Iroquois county vote, it was finally allowed to stand, and the county of Kankakee was organized. The first election was held in Momence, the largest town in the new county, in May, 1853, and county officers were chosen. The vote for a county seat showed no clear majority for any town. The first county court thus met at Momence and ordered an election for a county seat to be held June 21. The court laid out six

townships: Yellowhead, Bourbonnais, Aroma, Rockville, Limestone and Momence. Momence consisted of what is now Sumner, Ganeer, Momence, Pembroke, and six sections of the east side of St. Anne. Each township had at least one population center.

A little before the county seat election, a town of 43 blocks was platted and given the name Kankakee Depot. It was on the new Illinois Central railroad line and the railroad interests were determined that it become the county seat. They offered a block of land for the court house square and $5000 toward the court house building. Momence was equally determined to become the county seat. The town's leading citizens worked to get out the vote. The Indiana marshes and the Beaver Lake region were searched for voters. The final vote was about fifty percent greater than its registered voters. The Illinois Central interests sent all their construction crews and clerical workers to vote in Aroma, Bourbonnais and Limestone. The vote was double the population, but, as the newspapers reported, "Momence was tarred too badly with the same stick to demand a searching investigation".

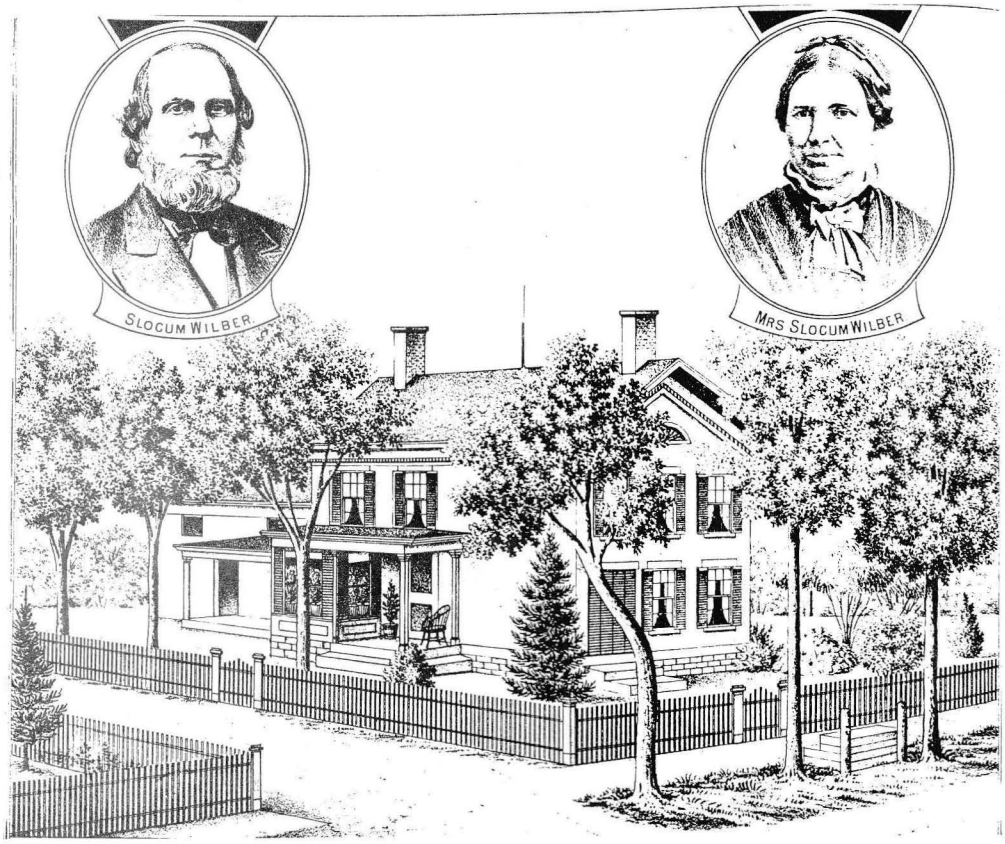
Losing the election was a blow to Momence but there was no time for bemoaning the decision. Another matter of pressing importance was already being debated. Momence was indeed the largest settlement in the county—it was time to incorporate as a town.

For years it had been called a "wide open" river town with as many saloons as stores and a meeting place for trappers, hunters, loggers, and from the marshes to the east, gamblers and thieves. Bert Burroughs wrote of these men, "they stood straight, talked straight, shot straight and took their whiskey straight. Their pastimes were poker, boxing, wrestling, foot racing, horse racing and now and then an honest-to-goodness fight". The early settlers and the business men who followed them to this community represented a new type of citizen. They were people who formed church congregations and built churches, who built schools, who formed businesses and industries, who wanted a "decent" town to live in. The Methodist group had been served for many years by S. P. Burr, a well-loved circuit rider. A parsonage had been built for him when, because of a throat ailment, he had resigned as a circuit preacher. Elder Burr led the fight for incorporation—for fight it was! The backwoodsmen were actively opposed; they wanted no restrictions. Elder Burr's life was threatened; there were open street fights; men who had long been friends became enemies. Old Dan Parmelee, whose place was just east of Joe Barbee's Indian Garden, lived alone in a little cabin and spent his time hunting and trapping. He was a crack shot—none but his good friends dared to go near his place. One such good friend was William Graham, but in a dispute over incorporation, (Bill was for, Dan against) Bill hit Dan over the head with a neck yoke. The story is told that for some time thereafter Dan came into town without his gun, for fear of what he would do if Bill continued the argument. Other fights did not end so peaceably, but, in due time the election was held and the proposition won.

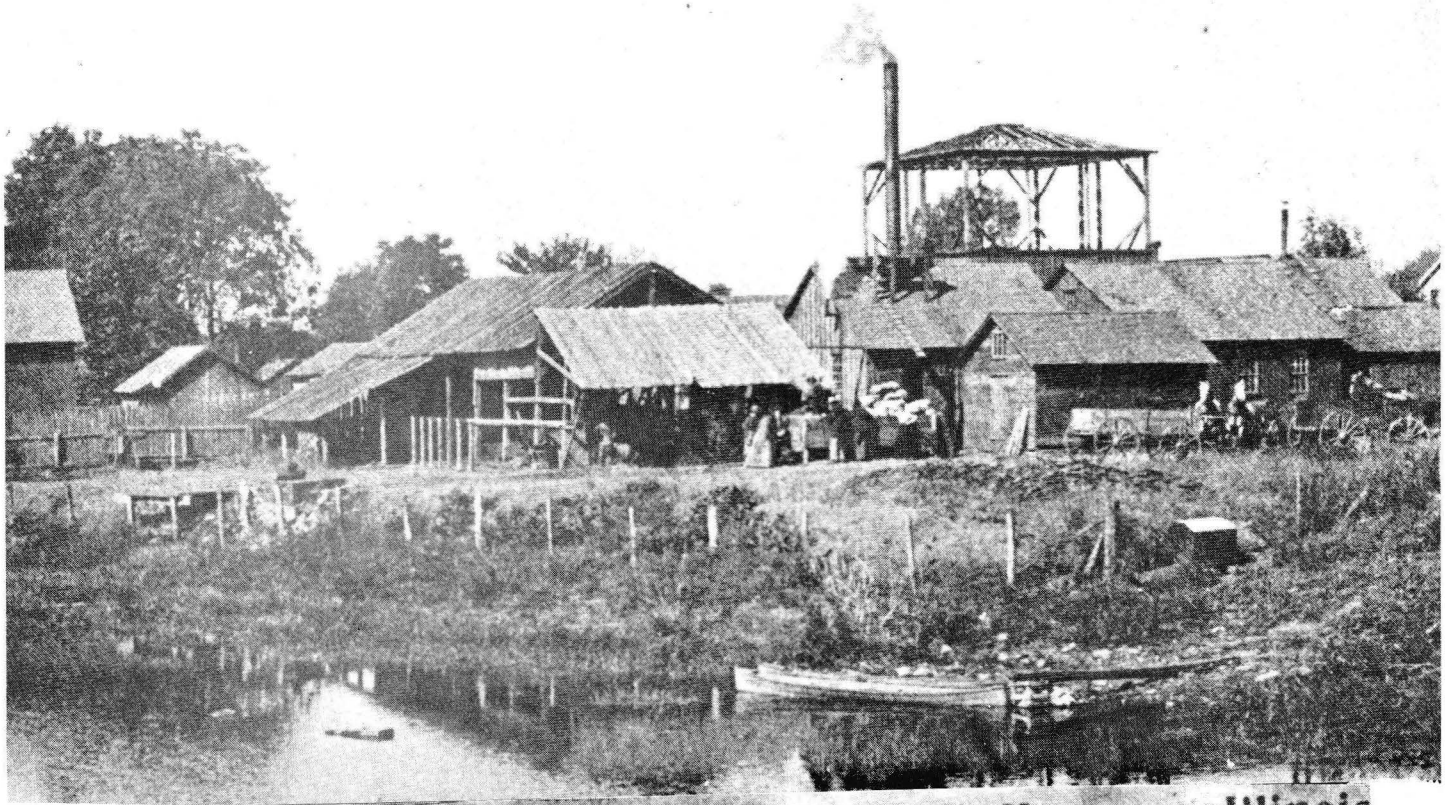
The citizens who had hoped for a peaceful, law-abiding community soon discovered that winning at the polls was not enough. When a corporate tax was levied both sides objected vocally and actively. Not only would men not pay the three dollar tax, they would not work out the tax on the streets of the town. There were arrests, trials and appeals, all of which took years; "getting used to the idea" also took years. Finally, some eight or nine years later incorporation was a recognized fact; Momence became a law-abiding town.

There were disputes and elections in the township as well. Sumner township was formed in 1856, St. Anne (which included Pembroke) in 1857, and Ganeer in 1859, reducing the township to its present size. The split with Ganeer was down the center of the main route which thus became the range line of the two townships, and was named Range Street. It was decided to name the new township for Ja-neir, the wife of Momence; evidently a clerical error in recording changed the J to G. Old records spelled the name Ganeir; it is not certain when the spelling changed again, or why. (Ganeer)

Dan Parmelee's cabin, sketched by Marilyn Ostrow.



The Slocum Wilbur home, just east of May-lan candles, looks much the same today.



Wm. J. Brown's Yard and Cider Mill, Momence, Illinois

Looking West from the Bridge.

III People and Places

The county seat and incorporation struggles did not deter newcomers to the town or the township. French Canadian farmers Peter Brassard, F. X. Longpre and Peter Blanchette settled in the township. The blacksmith, J. B. Paradis, started a wagon factory. He also built a steam boat and made one trip a day between Momence and Waldron. Slocum Wilbur was a pioneer seed grower who, one year, raised and shipped 15,000 pounds of cucumber seeds alone. Most of today's residential area east of the Dixie Highway was his seed farm, where he produced great quantities of pepper, cucumber, water melon, squash, peas, beans and other vegetable seeds. Many of the town's businessmen got their start as boys working on his farm.

William J. Brown emigrated to Momence from England in 1850. He was an excellent machinist who was always called upon to repair engines and all kinds of machinery. He built a cider mill (where the present city hall and fire department now stand). The townspeople called him affectionately "Old English" Brown and he was a favorite of the children. They were always at his cider mill with their buckets or cups when he drew off cider. No child was ever turned down. The home that Brown built (1850) at Second and Pine Streets still stands, owned, until recently, by his granddaughter, Lucy Brown.

William Astle, who also emigrated from England, came to Momence in 1855, worked and saved, and opened his own hardware store on River Street in 1862. In 1863 the toll bridges went down, to be replaced by free bridges. A toll collector was no longer needed and the little house on the western tip of the island was rented out by the Momence Bridge Company. The brick schoolhouse became L. B. Clark's carpenter shop. The Methodists built a new stone church. It was also in 1863 that the thirty Catholic families, under the guidance of Father P. Paradis built a church. The members themselves cut the timber, rafted it to the saw mill and built the little chapel on the site of the present church.

All of these events were overshadowed by the tragic war which began with the shelling for Fort Sumpter April 13, 1861. The year 1860 had been an exciting one, politically. Abraham Lincoln, an Illinois man, was very popular in this area. In his diary William Parish wrote that he had met Lincoln some twenty years earlier when he tried a case at Middleport. He remembered how the men gathered round him to hear his stories. The next time he saw Lincoln was at his home in Springfield after his nomination for the presidency. Although Lincoln did not campaign in Kankakee county, visitors from Chicago, Springfield and other large cities retold his stories to eager Momence listeners who, in turn, amplified them and repeated them to anyone who would listen. Lincoln had received seventy percent of the Kankakee county vote, and when, through Governor Yates, he asked for soldiers, the response was equally great. There were meetings in all the townships to urge men to enlist. Company D of the 42nd Infantry was made up almost entirely of Momence men. A report of the Adjutant General showed that Momence and Ganeer townships paid $26,047.75, the highest amount paid by any county township, for bounties, support of soldiers' families and other expenditures in aid of supressing the rebellion. There is no record of the additional thousands of dollars paid out for care of families and wounded men as well as for draft substitutes. The cost of the war, the loss of so many men as well as the economic difficulties that their going created, caused untold suffering and hardship for those left behind. Nothing surpassed, however, the misery of the soldier himself. Although their reunions later emphasized the glory of the campaigns, exerpts from the diary of Lieutenant B. F. Gray, during the Mission Ridge engagement, showed clearly that the war was not glorious.

> August 6, 1863
> Cars arrived at noon today. I got just no mail at all, as usual. I read Shakespeare. Some of the officers got on a high. All of us are just sweating to death. The Gewalaker stood at 98 in the shade. All quiet on the Tennessee.
> September 17 QUIT SMOKING
> Camped last night in Walker county. The enemy is massing on our left. Our Division lay in camp until noon when we went out on the right about half a mile and deployed as skirmishers. Thomases corps moved up on the left and Johnson and Davis came up.

Some cannonading on the left and skirmishing all along the line. All quiet at night and company maintains picket.

September 19

Started toward the left. Marched some 12 miles. Our brigade was then brought into fight. We were engaged about one hour. Loss in the right, 14 wounded and 2 killed. Our company sustained no loss. Lay on the battle field all night and built breast works.

September 20

Early in the morning our lines fell back to a new line of battle. Heavy cannonading commenced at 9 a.m., also musketry. We were thrown in at 10 and were repulsed with heavy loss. Our company lost 30 killed, wounded and missing. We fell back 8 miles. Our whole army was entirely routed. Loss very heavy.

September 21

Cold last night and poor show for sleep. We stayed all day where we camped last night at the cross roads. We built some breast works. The Rebs felt at our lines on the left but did not break them. Twelve more of our boys came in today, making it up to 21. Graham, T. O'Brien, Watson and Dutcher are reported killed.

September 22

We fell back to Chattanooga last night and are going to hold the place or die trying. Commenced building rifle pits and breast works. The Rebs came up and felt us. Night cold.

October 26

General Wood's Division left last night for the purpose of trying to open communications by rail or river. We got ¾ lb. of bread for 1 lb. of flour. Ate one loaf for dinner and one for supper and have got two left for tomorrow.

October 27

Got up this morning feeling rather hungry. Our troops let into the Rebs at daylight this morn. We have not ascertained yet with what results. Rice and gravy for supper. Are going to get quarter rations in the morning.

October 31

Cleared off last night and I finished the muster rolls. We were not mustered today as the officers were so slow. The boats are within 11 miles and we expect to be on full rations in 3 days . . . . . .

December 31 Strawberry Plains, Ga.

Rains today, also last night. The men are in a miserable condition, no tents or covering of any kind. Their rations are very small too, not nearly adequate to the exposure or even to sustain life. It seems as though we were needlessly detained here in this wilderness.

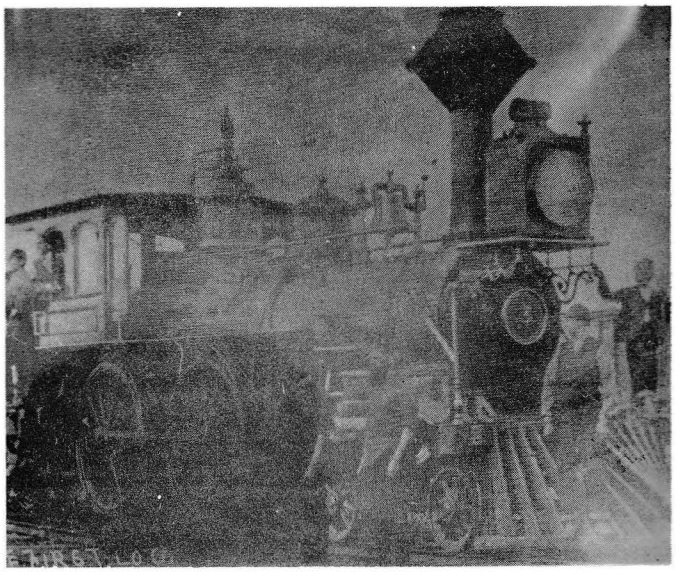
(After the war B. F. Gray lived and worked in Washington D. C., studied law at Columbia Law School and returned to Momence in 1872 to practice law. For many years he was attorney for the city.)

After Lee's surrender, April 9, 1865, whole regiments were mustered out as units, soldiers returning home singly or in groups in any way they could. Military records were thus incomplete or inaccurate; compensation for the wounded and sick was slow in payment or not paid at all; hardships continued long after the war had ended.

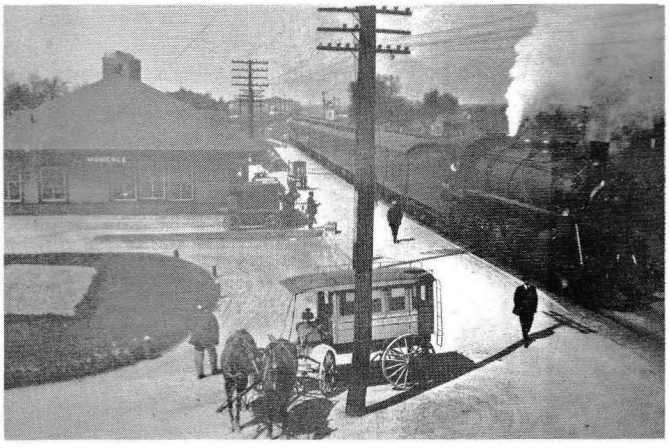
After a three or four year absence, the returning veterans saw changes in the community. There were new free bridges, a new Catholic church, new stores, and, of course, newcomers to the community. On the farms, corn was replacing wheat as a money crop and the new reaper was making grain harvesting easier. William Brown had built a self-raking reaper, from the patented plan of J. Atkin, for John Wright, the owner of *The Prairie Farmer*. Cyrus McCormick had also invented a reaper, and, by the end of the war, was manufacturing it and selling it to midwest farmers.

The economic slump caused by the war was alleviated somewhat by the news that a railroad would come to Momence. The Chicago, Danville and Vincennes railroad was chartered by the state legislature to build a railroad from Chicago to the southern part of the state. Work was begun in 1868 and the road finished to Danville in 1871. The townships through which it passed had issued bonds to raise money for the railroad; Momence gave $24,000. The road was almost parallel to the Illinois Central and was very important to the continued

growth of the township. Some years later the railroad added a "coal branch" from Brazil, Indiana to Momence where it was connected by the main line with Chicago. The railroad had relied on township funds for a part of its financing; St. Anne never paid the $30,000 promised and that, in part, was the cause of its failure. The assets were sold and a new charter granted in 1877 to the Chicago and Eastern Illinois Railroad.



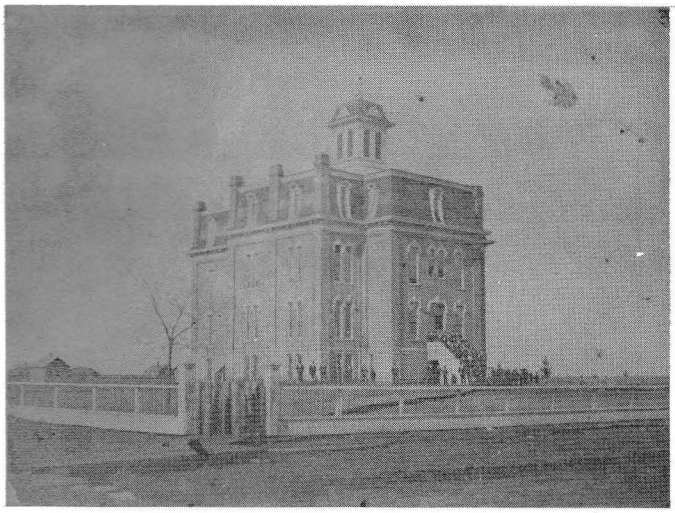
One of the earliest engines of the C and E I.



The C and E I Depot around 1900.

A year before the railroad was completed, J. B. A. Paradis established a weekly newspaper, *The Momence Reporter*; four years later (1874) Dr. Milan O. Clarke took over the editorship. The historian Daniel Paddock said of it, *"The Momence Reporter*, edited by Dr. M. O. Clarke of Momence is one of the most rigorously edited and spicy sheets in the county". An article in the *Kankakee Times* of February 19, 1885, reporting that Steven Dennis had purchased the *Momence Reporter* from Dr. Clarke (disabled by paralysis) concluded, "Mr. Clarke is one of the very best editorial writers of the country press in Illinois".

The Church of the Good Shepherd was organized as a parish during the year 1870, meeting in the hall above what is today Stanley's Farm Store. Six years later a small chapel was built near the north end of the bridge on River Street. It was soon outgrown, and in 1881 the present church, on the corner of Second and Locust Streets was erected.



Central School with its iron fence and post gateway.

Although both Momence and Ganeer townships had school districts, a special bill enacted by the legislature in 1868 created the Momence Union School District, two by three miles in size, partly in Momence township, partly in Ganeer township, and including the city of Momence. In 1871 the Central School (where Range Elementary School now stands) was built at a cost of $20,000. William Sweeney remembered that he was ten years old at the time of the school construction. One September morning his

mother sent him to the school for a fresh pail of water from the well. He had orders not to go into the building, but the temptation to climb up to the cupola was too great. He climbed up, uneventfully, but on the way down he fell between the joists. At the third floor his suspenders caught on a nail and he hung there for a time. The suspenders finally broke and he fell to the basement where Mr. Hubbard, the contractor, rescued him, revived him and took him home to face his mother's anger—with broken suspenders and a few bruises.

The school, when completed, was enclosed by a four foot iron fence with posts for a gateway—spaced so that people could get in but cows could not.

The high school department was completed by Professor G. H. White in 1875; the enrollment was 85, nearly half being tuition pupils. The first class of seven young women and one young man was graduated June 1, 1877.

Mr. Ernest Griffin of Grant Park, who graduated in 1896, said, "It was the ambition of every boy in school to climb the flagpole on top of the cupola and write his name on the silver ball above the flagpole". He added that only two boys were able to do it, Mitch Cantway and Fred Clarke.

Class of 1892 M. H. S.

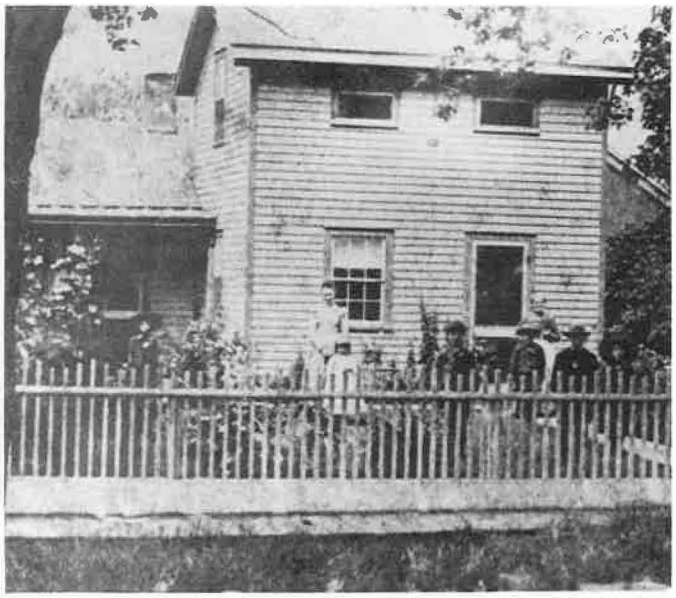
s is the first class graduated under Professor H. P. Little. ıe Commencement Exercises were held in the old Murphy pera House. The graduates are left to right: Florence (Riker) Reins. Martha (Clark) Watson. Mary (Knighthart) Meinzer. Martha (Chipman) Henry. Nora (Culver) Paradis. Frances Mc Daniels.

From the Momence Press-Reporter, July 1939.

In 1894, just twenty-three years after the completion of the Central School, another was needed and the Lorraine School was built on the south side of the river.

This rapid population growth began before 1870 and was responsible for a great deal of building in the early seventies. J. B. Durham organized a bank. He and J. B. Wickes felt that Front Street (present Washington Street) would soon replace River Street as the business center. Each man had two brick buildings erected on Front Street east of Range Street. J. B. Worchester put up the next building and the block began to be called the "J. B. Block". A few years later W. G. Nichols built two more brick buildings, completing the block. William Astle, who had established his hardware store in '62, moved into the new building (present location) in October 1871 by the light of the Chicago fire. While this sounds like an exaggeration, those who know insist that it is true—that great fire lighted the heavens for more than fifty miles. There has been an Astle Hardware business in Momence for 114 years—in the same location for 105 years. It is the oldest continuous business run by the same family in the township. William Astle was a leader in the Episcopal church as well as a civic leader and Astles ever since have have followed in that tradition.

William Astle who founded the oldest business in Momence, now run by his great-grandson, Charles Astle.



Home built by William Astle about 1861 on the corner of Washington and Pine Streets. It was torn down in 1970 and replaced by the new Momence Federal Savings and Loan building.

There was building, too, on Range Street north of Front Street in spite of the creek that developed at flood times. When the river was high, water used to back up from a spot beyond the C and E I depot, forming a creek that ran southwest, crossing Range Street in front of the livery stable (Plaque Village), then back of the bank building (Karlock Enterprises) until it rejoined the river. In the spring people used the foot bridges to cross it; wagons often mired in it. In the winter the children skated on it; in the summer it was a dirty ditch. Finally in the late 1890's the ditch was cleaned out. Bustles, old shoes, tin cans and other rubbish were removed, the ditch was filled in and the street leveled off.

The Astle Hardware Store in 1924. From left to right, Lance West, Charles B. Astle (grandson of the founder), William Birch, Milan Astle (great-grandson of founder), John Cummings, Tom Newsam.

Range Street (looking north) showing the foot bridge over the creek. This picture shows a funeral procession starting from the Opera House.

J. B. Paradis had built a steamboat to carry produce and merchandise between Momence and Waldron in 1854; by the 1880's river steamboats were a common sight in the Momence area. The "Union Club" made excursion trips from Momence east to Olds Landing, Indian Town and the state line. There were smaller craft also for hauling produce and supplies between Momence and the farms east of the city. Dr. Clarke, editor of the *Momence Reporter* took the Union Club trip to the state line and back. He reported that it was an excellent trip, the boat itself a marvel, the ride most enjoyable. In the same paper his editorial commented on the danger to the bridges that cattle crossing caused. "The village authorities should see to it that all cattlemen who violate the ordinance relating to driving cattle across the bridges should be prosecuted to the full extent of the law", he wrote. Not long after, a front page headline read, "A BIG SMASH AND A BAD AFFAIR". The story related that as Levi Croman was hurrying a drove of cattle over the bridge, one of the spans gave way and the bridge, cattle and all, were dumped into the river killing five or six head of cattle. The article further said that it would take from $2000 to $3000 to put the structure in shape and in the meantime everyone who wished to cross would have to ford or ferry the south branch. Evidently cows, allowed to wander about as they chose, as well as cattle driven carelessly across the bridges were real civic problems for a long time and were finally solved by a town ordinance in 1888. The following year editor Stephen W. Dennis of the *Momence Reporter* wrote, "When the board, by a narrow majority, passed the ordinance prohibiting live stock from running at large on the streets there was considerable dissatisfaction. After a year's trial, however, very few, if any, can be found who wish to return to the old order of things. People have been encouraged to plant shade trees and to better care for the streets and walks in front of their premises. It would now be

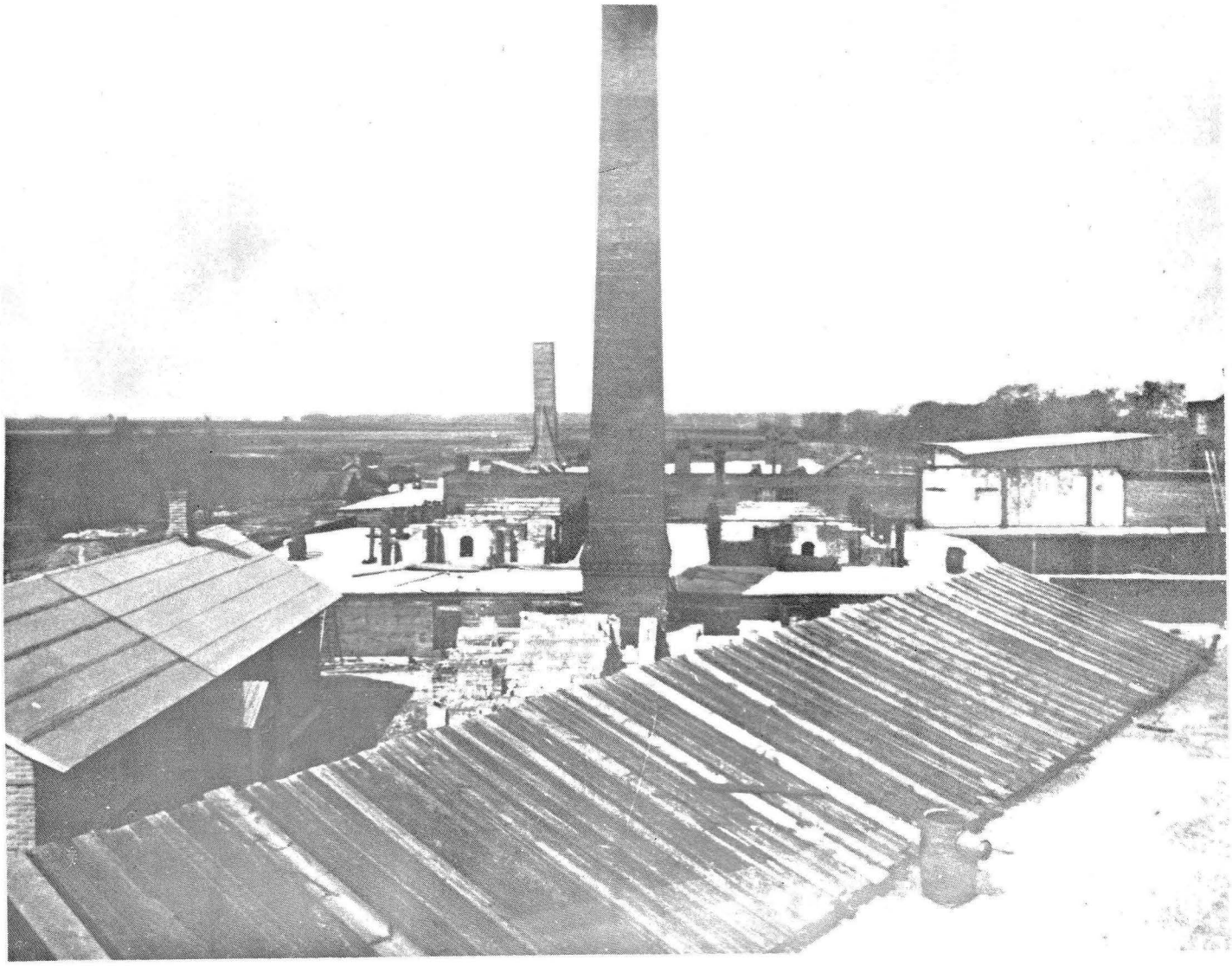
almost impossible to return to the old way . . . . . The completion of the new railroad with its innumerable side tracks, all unenclosed, would render the life of the village cow rather precarious . . . . . Thus it may be said that one of the vexing questions has forever passed out of the area of village politics. The cow question is a dead issue."

The Illinois, Indiana and Iowa Railroad came into Momence in 1882. By 1900 there were four railroads serving the city and the township. Letourneau's history says that Momence was entering a period of great business and commercial growth. This growth had begun a little earlier than 1900, however. By the late 1870's there was growing ice business; one winter James Mix harvested 15,000 tons of ice. In 1884 the Tiffany Brick Works was incorporated. The natural clay was to be used for sewer pipe and for tile; Goose Lake clay from the northern part of the state would be shipped in by rail. At first brick was made only for the construction of the company's buildings and kilns. By 1886 there were six kilns and a foundation for the drying room. The next year red pressed brick (the press was L. J. Tiffany's invention) was being manufactured; fifty men were employed. By 1889 two more kilns were completed as well as a central heating system with tunnels supplying heat to each kiln and to the drying room. One hundred men were employed, most of whom lived in town and walked to work. The fine red pressed brick was sold for buildings in Chicago and other large cities and was acknowledged to be the best in the world in quality and design. However the Tiffany brothers had read articles in English journals, by ceramist Isaac Hardy, of an enameling process for brick. After much correspondence Isaac Hardy agreed to come to Momence for a year to introduce the process at the Tiffany Brick Company. He came in 1893 with three sons, Ernest, Ralph and James Edward. With his special formula he started up the process by means of which the face of the brick was covered with a coating of procelain in any shade or tint desired. The Tiffany Enameled Brick Company became even more well known world wide, winning prizes and recognition at expositions across the country and in Europe. Isaac Hardy, who had promised to stay one year, stayed six years and returned to England without his sons. In spite of his urging, they liked America, they liked Momence and decided to stay. Ernest was made superintendent of the company, although all three brothers were

employed there. Many of the store fronts on South Roosevelt Road in Chicago and on State Street were made of this enameled brick. As many as two hundred men were often employed, depending on the size and the number of orders.

Isaac and Mary Hardy in 1902 on their 50th wedding anniversary.

The Tiffany Brick Company employees in front of the yards in the early 1920's. First full row, 5th from the left, Ernest Hardy, 6th from the left, L. J. Tiffany, 7th from the left, E. O. Hermann, 9th from the left, Ralph Hardy, whose three daughters, Irene Hardy, Mrs. H. Hungerford and Mrs. G. H. Hertz still live in Momence.
Directly behind Ralph Hardy is Ernie Usher who supplied this picture.



The Tiffany Brick Company

Even before the Brick Works was organized, Frederick Knighthart built a big three story hotel on the southeast corner of Range and Front streets. He had come to Momence in 1869. He kept a saloon and ran a livery stable as well as managing his farm. His hotel (built in 1882) was known as the Central House; it was considered one of the finest in the country. There were residents who made their homes there. The two large dining rooms (one a family room) served the finest foods, almost entirely produced on his farm. Businessmen ate dinner there at noon for 25 cents; at the large tables in the family room entire families came every night for supper. There was a sample room for salesmen to show their wares; buyers came from St. Anne, Watseka, Manteno and other nearby towns to place their orders.

Almost across the street, next to the Parish Bank building, was W. J. Dixon's bakery and restaurant. Clara Dixon Melby remembers the children coming in for penny candy, the businessmen for dinner or supper, the families who always ate there. Whether in the restaurant or at home, dinner was at noon, supper in the evening. Mornings were spent baking pies, cakes and preparing the noon meal. Dessert at noon was always pie. For supper one had fried potatoes (left over from dinner) and dessert was always cake with fruit or pudding.

The Central House and the restaurants were busy places, soon to be even busier. The C and E I purchased land south of the depot and south of the island in 1887. Two years later a round house, rip track and repair shops were located on the land south of the island (about where the Tuthill plant now stands) hiring from forty to fifty men. That same year the railroad purchased the eastern half of the island and turned in into a resort area. Boat houses were built, a dancing pavilion and bandstand erected, rope swings and a merry-go-round set up for children, picnic tables and a refreshment stand prepared. Opening day was a huge success, reported in the paper, "The picnic season at the new and beautiful park owned, controlled and recently highly improved by the C and E I road was opened last Saturday, June 16, 1887. The Momence band met the visitors at the station and rendered very acceptable music. They then repaired to the dance hall . . . . . The swings, teeters and shooting gallery also attracted attention, but it was the river and boating facilities that asserted the great superiority of these grounds over all others. Twenty or thirty boats were kept constantly on the water and the little steamer of Captain Gibeault was in great demand." Island Park, well advertised by the C and E I became famous; excursion trains from Chicago were filled with pleasure seekers during the summer; special holidays often saw several thousand tourists arriving. Many of them picnicked on the island, many more went to the Central House or Dixon's for meals. Lou St. Aubin, Knighthart's granddaughter remembered Central House often serving 300 to 400 persons on a fourth of July. She and her friends were pressed into service as dishwashers, much to their displeasure. Other children were more fortunate and sneaked onto the island to ride the merry-go-round, enjoy the swings or join in the games and contests. In 1889 the newspaper reported, "On July 4th, 9000 people visited the island, from Kankakee, Brazil, Morocco, 1100 from Chicago and from as far south as Danville. Speeches were made, there was dancing in the hall, 70 boats of the park were constantly in use, a merry-go-round entertained the children . . . . . toward night the crowd gradually dispersed, though dancing continued until morning, but at last the great fourth of July celebration became a thing of the past." What a contrast this was to the first fourth of July celebration in 1837 on the south side of the river—a gathering of some forty or fifty people who feasted on venison, fish chowder and pie and listened to the speeches of Philip Worchester, Newell Beebe and A. S. Vail. The same newspaper that reported the fourth of July celebration also noted that all the park alligators except one had escaped and were cavorting up and down the river. "Fond parents will, in future years, have a powerful argument to use in preventing their youngsters from bathing in the river", concluded the article.

The telephone, which had come to Momence about 1880 was no longer a novelty. In 1882 the newspaper said, "We saw a woman in the telephone office Tuesday morning talking to someone in Herscher, and it was not much of a trick either". By 1889 the telephone office was supplied with a long distance transmitter so that conversations could be carried on with Chicago with as much ease as with Grant Park.

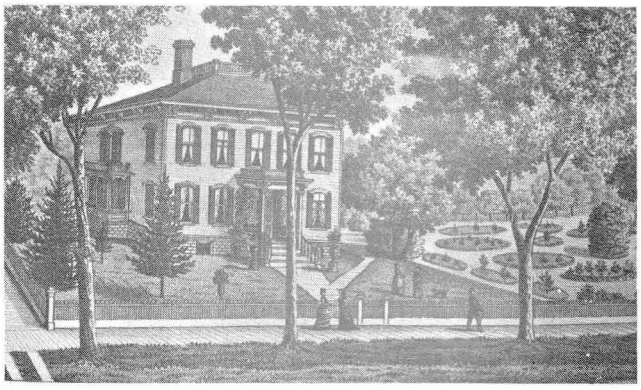
W. J. Dixon in front of his bakery and restaurant.

Nichols Cemetery (above) Shronts Cemetery (below)
In the early days of the community, these two settlers allowed the use of a part of their land as cemeteries, one on the north side of the river, the other on the south side. (It was not always possible to cross the river) In 1874 the Shronts family deeded this land to a cemetery association governed by a board of trustees; at about the same time the Nichols land was also deeded as a permanent cemetery.

IV Pleasures and Pastimes

In 1888, Knighthart enlarged his hotel and put in steam heating, the Building and Loan Association was organized, Front and Range Streets were becoming as busy business centers as River Street, the Tiffany Brick Company and the Anderson Brick Company were flourishing industries that kept many employed as did the C and E I round house and repair shops. Momence was developing as a railroad industrial center and people were moving in because there were jobs for them. The earliest settlers were French Canadian and New Yorkers. German, Swedish, English and Irish immigrants came soon after, some settling in town, others on farms east of town. There were several Negro families who had lived in the community from its earliest days—all together creating a mixture of cultures that grew and modified side by side. However, many of the newcomers of the seventies and the eighties were Danish and Polish who, feeling more comfortable with their own cultures, stayed together. The little group of homes east of the C and E I tracks were built by the Danish newcomers; gradually that section of town became known as "Danetown" or "Denmark". In 1897 the Danish Lutherans built a little chapel on the south side of the river where services were held in Danish. The homes immediately west of the tracks (4th, 5th and 6th streets and west to Ash Street) were built by the Polish immigrants. Naturally everyone was soon calling that section "Poland" or "Polish town". The children, whose friends were not just neighbors but scattered throughout the town and township, gradually broke the pattern. By the second generation "Denmark" and "Poland" were not so tightly knit: today there is no specific ethnic section of any kind.

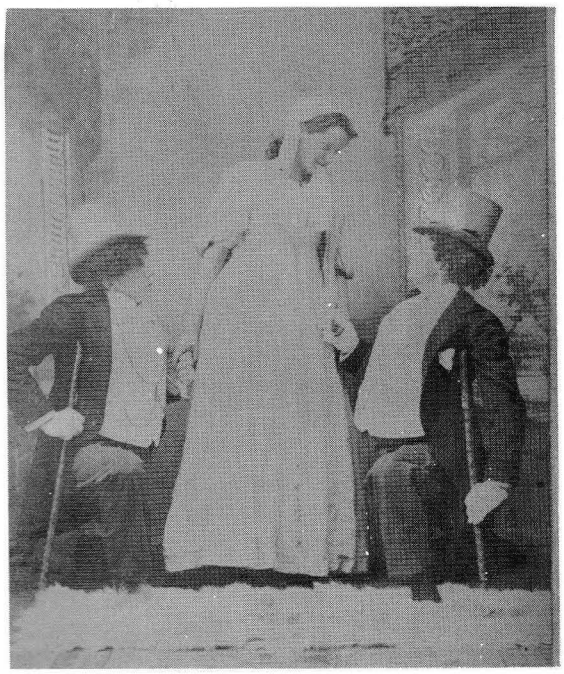
The section east of the C and E I tracks known as "Denmark".



This home, much changed, is today the Ruge Funeral Home.

While Momence was indeed developing into a business and industrial center, it was also known as a city of beautiful homes. In the township were the gracious farm homes of Chatfield, Hess, and Schrontz, as well as the older Graham, Nichols and Metcalf homes. In the city one pointed out with pride the beautiful W. G. Nichols homes, the Chipman, Tiffany, Durham and Hardy houses and, above all, the Wikstrom home, "Villa Swea", a stately three story twenty room home that was not only a city mansion but a little bit of Sweden. Axel Wikstrom came to Momence from Sweden in 1865, married Cedelia Stratton of this city, then returned to Sweden to introduce her to his family. When he returned to Momence he bought a large farm, built a long rambling farm house and sent to Sweden for furnishings. In the early 1890's he decided to live in town and so the magnificent Villa Swea was built. The lovely Swedish furniture was moved in from the farm home, from Sweden came tapestries, family portraits and paintings. He and his wife loved people; they were now able to entertain as much as they liked. They kept open house for friends and lent their home for many community functions. Mrs. Rowell, a niece, said in an interview, "At Christmas time the house was at its best; the living room aglow with Christmas candles and gay with flowers, the dining room with its blue Swedish china, its shining silver and glass, its little silk flags, Swedish and American, and the big log of banana ice cream that we always had at Christmas."

Cedelia Stratton Wikstrom



A scene from one of the dramatic club's performances. From left to right—John Lincoln, Belle Blake, Frank Riker.

The Wikstroms were not the only gracious hosts—Marguerite Durham Keil remembers the many times a friend "dropped in" near meal time and was always invited to stay for one of her mother's fine dinners. She remembers, too, a singing group that met often at her home. She and her brother, supposedly in bed, used to sit at the top of the stairs to watch and listen. The music was delightful. Her mother was an accomplished musician who could play anything the group wanted to sing and in any key requested. There were parties out in the country—guests returning by bobsled in winter or buggy in summer—well fed and happy. In the winter there were ice skating parties along the river; in the summer there was a horse fair every month. Roller skating became popular and a skating rink was built. A dramatic club was formed, performing in Murphy Hall (where Lang's garage is now). When Lou Allen, a well known actor settled in Momence and took over the club, he developed some fine talent. The plays became such a success that the hall had to be "done over" to accommodate the large audiences. The renovated hall with its new stage and scenery was renamed the Momence Opera House. The Y.W.C.A. organized a library with a membership fee of $1.00 entitling the member to a book a week. Of the literary societies the Historical Club was best known, giving such programs as: People of Greece and Their Origins by Mrs. B. F. Gray, or, An Account of the Trojan War by D. S. McKinstry. Dances were popular, formal elegant affairs sponsored by social or church groups and held at the Opera House. For the men, the Odd Fellows and the Masons were active organizations; the Momence Woman's Club was organized in the late nineties.

Social and business life were, at first, inconvenienced by the bad roads of the community, but each year the roads worsened until they became a real problem. Mud holes grew so large that they could not be bypassed and wagons and buggies too often mired in the ditch. Newspaper editorials spoke eloquently of the need for paved roads as a stimulus to business. After endless debate the town purchased a stone crusher and began paving the streets. By the turn of the century the ditch was filled in and the streets were paved. Wooden sidewalks and wooden store awnings were eliminated, hitching rails were removed, and streets were marked and houses numbered.

In 1891 the village voted to change to city government and J. J. Kirby was elected the first mayor. The year before the village board had voted unanimously to install an electric light plant with eight or ten lights strategically placed to light the city streets from early dusk to midnight. The plant was installed in 1890 with L. W. Calkins as superintendent. He was often called out at night to go to the plant and throw on a few more corn cobs when

the lights suddenly went out. Ocassionally, when there was a dance, the "boys" chipped in and paid Mr. Calkins to leave the lights on after midnight.

Some of these same "boys"–a group of men who always went together to put out fires–organized a fire department and raised enough money to buy a fire engine. Mitch Cantway said that at the call of "fire" twenty or thirty men would grab the rope (the engine came equipped with about thirty feet of rope for pulling), but often the roads were so bad that someone would have to go to the livery stable for a team and wagon to come pull the fire engine out of the mud.

When, during these same early nineties, surveyors for the Big Four Railroad arrived in Momence to consider locating a terminal there, the editor of the *Reporter* wrote, "It's a cold day when Momence hasn't got something new to worry poor old Kankakee".

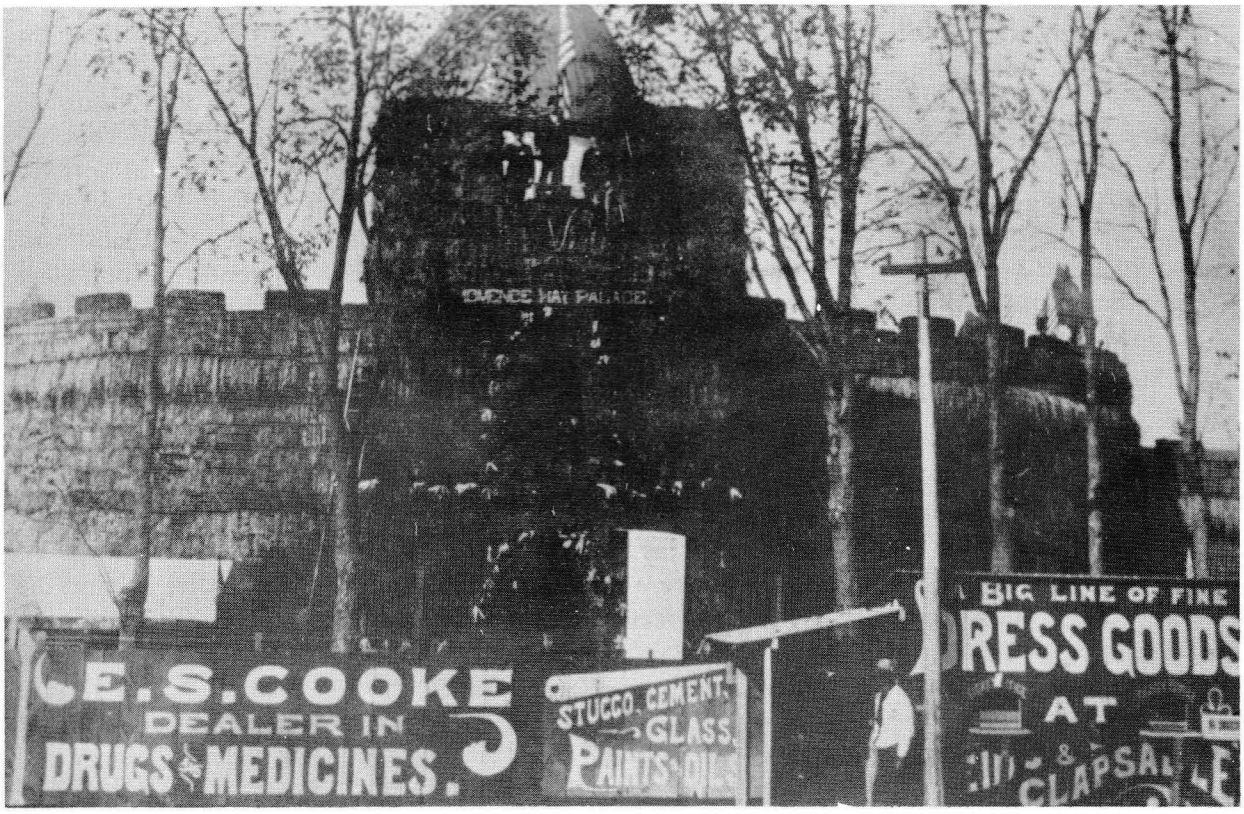
The Inter-state Hay Palace housing the fall festival for the interstate district (eight Illinois counties, seven Indiana counties) was another something new to worry Kankakee. The palace, at the west end of town, covered about an acre of ground, its wooden frame completely covered by bales of hay, giving it a look of masonry. The towers were from 60 to 80 feet in height, the central dome was 90 feet high. With its towers and halls spreading out from the central building it resembled a medieval castle. Inside were exhibits of farm products and machinery, art exhibits and a flower show. Outside were many kinds of races and a baseball tournament. The festival lasted ten days, one of which was a children's day with special games for the youngsters and a baby show. It was a great popular and financial success; the second year it was "bigger and better". There was no third year. The Hay Palace and festival did not continue, undoubtedly for a number of valid reasons, although there were townspeople who would have said that it was because everyone had gone crazy over bicycles.

The new craze was sweeping the country, invading even small communites. By 1890 there were 17 men's and boys' bicycles and 5 girls' bicycles in Momence. Clara Deerson, Meta and Grace Scramlin and Bertha Longpre were among the first enthusiasts–riding occasionally to Grant Park and back. Billy Brassard, R. L. Edwards and Steve Wheeler often bicycled to Manteno and back–quite a feat over the rough roads of the day. In 1891 Leon Tiffany had a bicycle with a small chair and extra wheel on the side, made especially so that he could take his small daughter for rides. By 1895 there were almost 50 bicycles in town. For the safety of pedestrians an ordinance was passed prohibiting them on the sidewalks. An editorial said, "Momence is becoming desperately addicted to the craze and it sometimes keeps a fellow guessing pretty lively which way to dodge".

During the "bicycle craze" such a group scene was not unusual.

Mrs. Leon Tiffany

A horse auction, about 1890. The scene is looking west on River Street. William Brown's cider mill is in the background.



The famous Hay Palace which is still remembered by many county residents.

V Disputes and Decisions

During the years of Momence's development its citizens had many disputes, settled by vote, by court decisions, or a good street fight. None were more heated than the "battle" over the city water works project. The city council voted for an ordinance providing for a city water works; Mayor Atherton vetoed it; the city council passed it over his veto. During this time bitter debates raged throughout the town; W. W. Parish, Sr. received letters threatening to burn his buildings and poison his stock if he didn't stop his alderman son from working for the water plant; C and E I officials received letters threatening to burn the station and wreck trains if they didn't fire Alderman (pro water works) Pittman; the editor of the paper received letters telling him to warn pro water plant aldermen to insure themselves against fire. When, in spite of these threats, the ordinance was passed, the opponents filed a suit and a hearing was held before Judge Small in Kankakee. One hundred sixty objectors lined up to testify. The jury sustained the ordinance and the opponents took the matter to a higher court, lawyer Gray saying that he would fight the ordinance all the way to the Supreme Court if necessary. The Supreme Court reached a compromise agreeable to both sides and a contract was let. It was almost election time; three of the "pro" aldermen were finishing their terms; Mayor Atherton refused to sign the bonds and the work could not begin. The town went "election mad". There were more threatening letters, there were meetings night after night, there were letters and editorials in the newspaper, there were debates or arguments whenever a "pro" met an "anti"; the "antis" had to elect only one alderman to replace a retiring "pro". Although highly vocal, their number was not great enough. Mayor Atherton was defeated and the water works ticket won with a greater majority than anyone had anticipated. A great celebration was staged. The band was called out, the fire wagon was hauled out, the newly elected officials were put into carts and led the procession through town amid bonfires and fireworks.

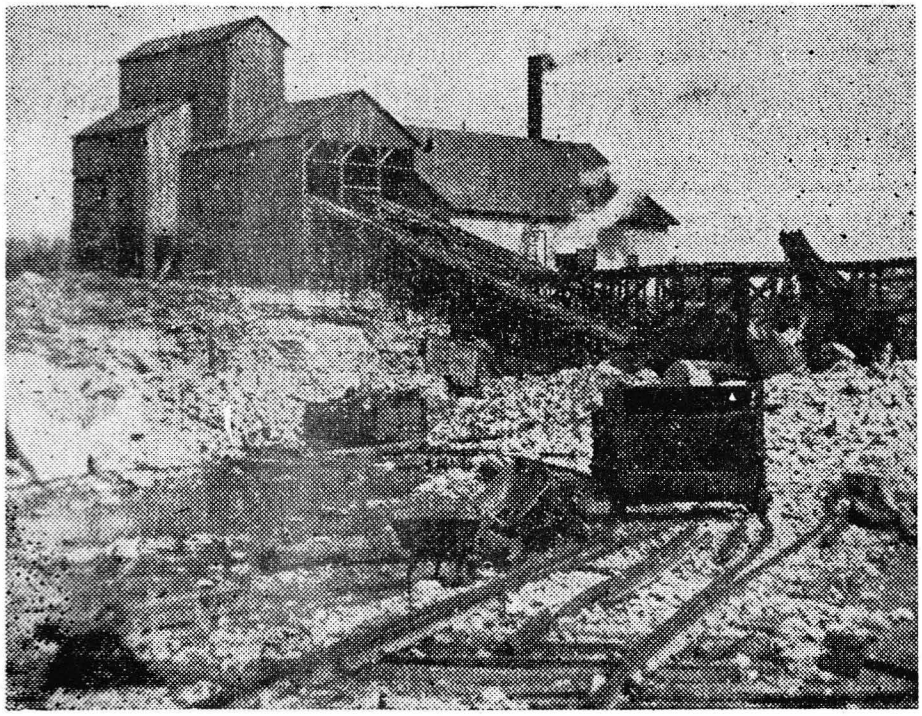
Just before the turn of the century the Durham bank closed and a new bank, the First National Bank was organized by W. P. Watson, Ed Chipman, J. J. Kirby and W. W. Parish, Jr. In 1907 their new building on the northwest corner of Front and Range Streets was built and the bank moved into its new quarters. W. W. Parish sold his interest in the bank to V. T. Brassard. In 1914 he organized the Parish Bank.

The C and E I, already employing forty to fifty men with its round house and repair shops, began a new industry in 1899—quarrying stone. Until it halted operation in 1904 it was an important part of the growth of the city. The stone pit, 350 feet by ¼ mile, dug out in shelves varied in depth from 30 to 60 feet. Stone was loaded into the cars by hand and hauled by horse up to the crusher. At the bottom of the pit were tracks and switching levers on which the loaded cars went up to the crusher and the empty cars returned to the pit. A system of pumps kept the pit from filling with water which constantly seeped in from underground springs and from the river at the north end of the quarry. When operations ceased in 1904 the pumping stopped and the quarry soon filled with water. It was a perfect swimming hole for Momence children. The C and E I offered to sell the property to the city, but the city council refused to buy. Eventually the land was sold to a Mr. Barnhill who fenced it off. Today it is Mirror Lake privately owned by the Rex Petersons and the Donald Reisings.

In 1904 the closing of the quarry probably caused less excitement than the appearance of the first automobile on the streets of Momence. It was a Jackson, owned by the Wennerholms. (Gus had come to America in 1886 and settled in Momence with his brother who had come three years earlier. In 1893 they bought Knighthart's livery stable and a farm in Ganeer township.) Other automobiles appeared on the streets a few years later. The building at Seventh and Market Streets (present dog food plant) was, for a few years, an assembly plant for Blackstone automobiles. It was a short-lived venture; a company making ladders had moved into the building by the time the Condon family came to Momence.

In his book *We Called It Music* Eddie Condon recalled his Momence childhood in the early 1900's. He spoke of the river where the kids all learned to swim and the quarry for those who had graduated from the river. He remembered that the first ledge was ten feet under water—no place for a beginner. To be a member of the gang, one had to dive in, find the track that ran to the bottom, follow it hand over hand until he reached the switching lever at the bottom and pull the switch. Those on the surface could hear the click as the switch was pulled, proof that the deed was accomplished. In the summer and fall the boys hunted. They picked up little metal bits lying around at the ladder factory to put in their sling shots. Anything moving was fair game. He recalled,

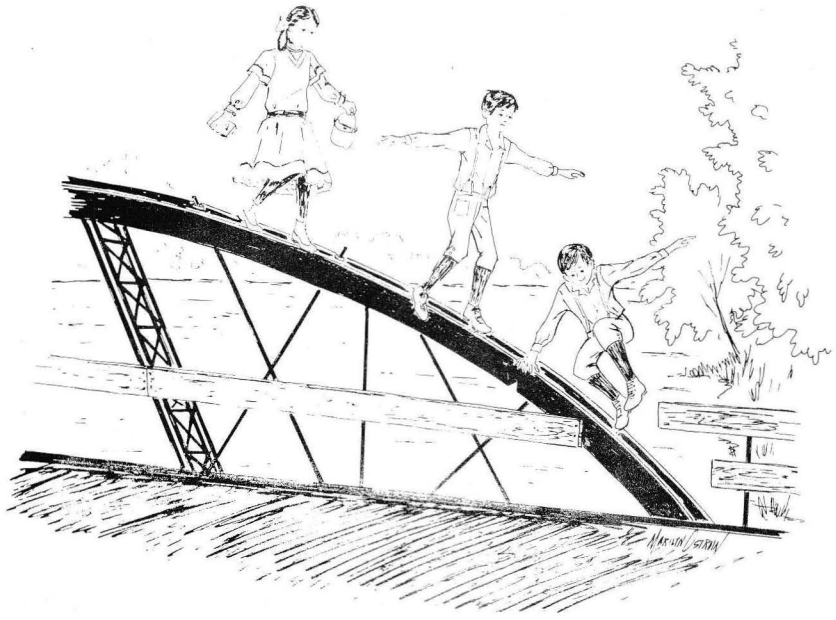
From Stone Quarry to Swimming Hole; That's Story of C&EI Pit



C&EI Stone Quarry In About 1900

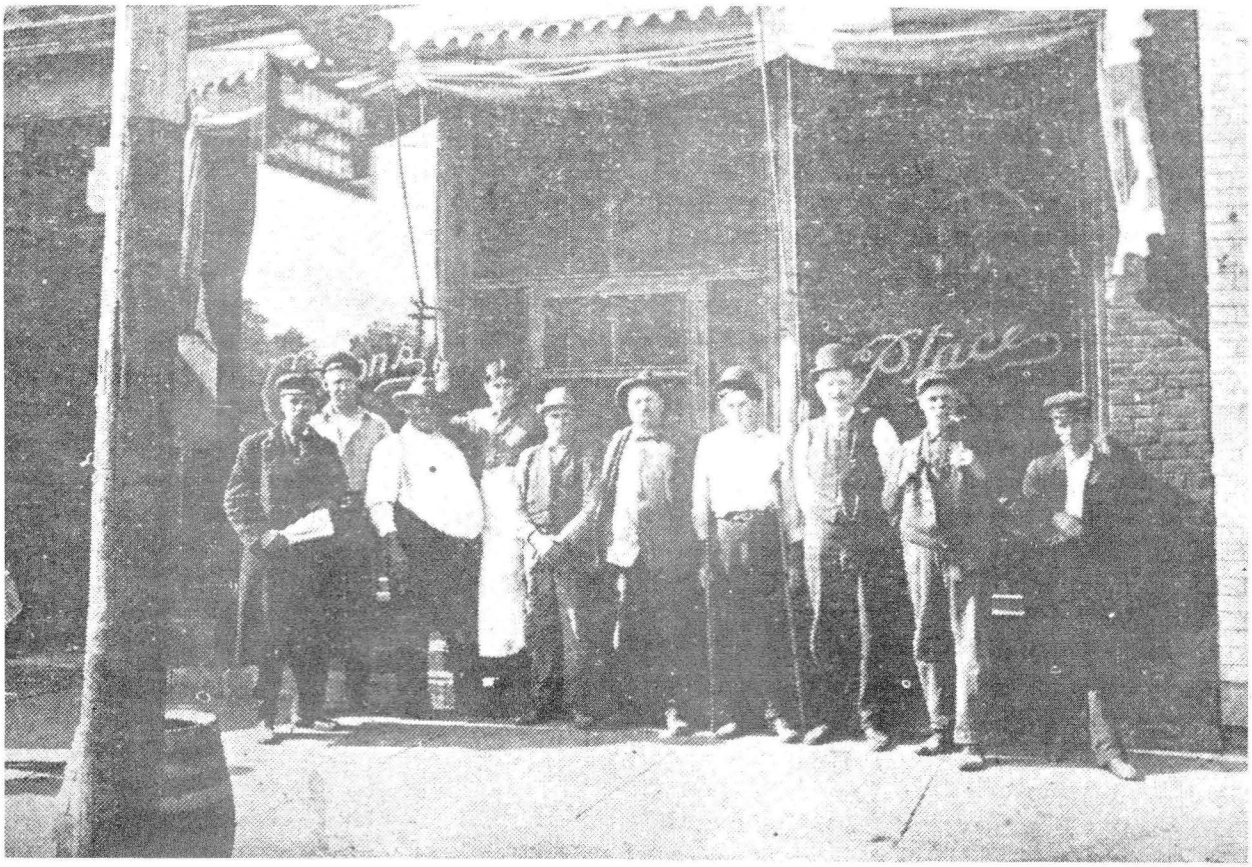
too, his "pals in crime"– Goats Bukowski, Rats Bukowski, Kittyboo Chipman, Posy Gibeault and Snake Kirby. Their only worry was getting caught taking a shot at someone's cat, climbing someone's tree or running someone down with a bike. He remembered the iron bridges with their heavy curved side rails which were a source of amusement for Momence children. Lucy Brown, who crossed the bridges several times a day going to the Lorraine School, said that she and her friends always walked on those curved rails. When asked about such dangerous play, Effie Berglund said, "Oh, my, yes, all the children did that". Evidently no one fell into the river; their parents never knew. Eddie Condon wasn't so fortunate, or perhaps his game was more dangerous. In his book he told of the time that he tied up a boy and hung him over the bridge, only to be caught in the act and reported to his father.

Mr. Condon ran a saloon, one of five in town. One writer suggested that drinking must have been quite a pastime in Momence. In the early 1900's saloons were coming under increasing criticism. The influence of Women's Temperance Societies coupled with a strong religious revival was making itself felt and the words "local option" invariably brought forth debate. Every community could vote for or against the sale of liquor. The Momence Municipal League favored the licensed sale of liquor for better moral and financial conditions, the anti-saloon forces vehemently opposed such thinking. In 1906 Momence voted "wet"; in 1908 the headline read, "MOMENCE DRY, GANEER WET". Eddie Condon, whose father was a saloon keeper recalled those local option years. "The saloon", he wrote, "was on one side of the street or the other, depending on how the people voted. Range Street ran through the middle of



The north span with its curved iron rails that the children balanced on when crossing. (An original sketch by Marilyn Ostrow)

The bridge over the south channel with its high girders that the boys liked to climb.



Condon's Tavern where Stanley's Farm Store is now located. John Condon is third from the right.

One of the many "local option" parades staged during the years 1906 through 1916.

Momence and down the middle of Range Street went the line dividing Momence township from Ganeer township. Local option was a popular political diversion and one or the other of the townships was always voting the drys in and the wets out or the wets in and the drys out. A girl named Laura Brady had a hat shop across the street from the saloon and they changed sides according to the vote."

During those local option years an accident on the C and E I was used as an argument against saloons. A group of children, some fifty or more, had come from Chicago for a day at Island Park. On the return trip there was a serious accident near Chicago Heights and most of the children were killed. Some said that the engineer had spent too much time in the saloon across from the island. Whatever the reason, after the accident the excursions to Island Park became less popular. Finally the C and E I gave up the park, turning the property over to the city of Momence. It was used as a picnic area, the American Legion keeping the grounds in order for many years. The huge pavilion which housed the dance hall and restaurant was bought by P. Brouillette and moved to the south bank of the river just east of the bridge where it became a skating rink. When its days as a rink and dance hall were over W. W. Parish , Jr. bought it and moved it to his south side farm for a sheep barn.

Oscar Conrad had established a bakery at the corner of Front and Range Streets when he came to Momence from Germany around 1900. By 1909 he had moved to a new location on the island. He announced in the *Press Reporter* that his new bakery was completed and in operation, the most sanitary and up-to-date in the county. The "New Era" mixer was driven by electricity, and the ovens had a capacity for 300 loaves. Bread was delivered fresh to the stores each morning where it sold 6 loaves for 25 cents.

The *Momence Reporter* had consolidated with the *Island News* in 1906 and was called the *Momence Press-Reporter*. There was a second newspaper, the *Momence Progress*. Both papers reported the dedication of the new St. Patrick's Academy in 1908, the building of a new Catholic church and the organization of the Parish Bank in 1914.

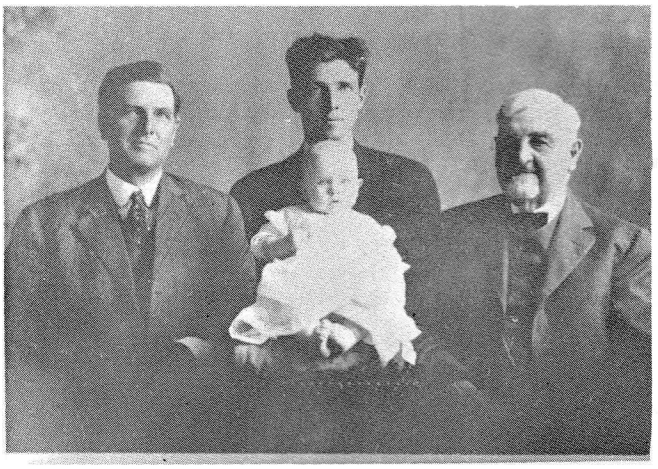
Eddie Condon (as a child in Momence he was called Albert) went to St. Patrick's Academy. He remembered his first job as a water boy for the workmen building the new Catholic church. They were slating the roof and although too young for such work, he carried bucket after bucket of water up the ladder to the men. At the end of the day Father Brie paid him by check—$1.00. "The next day I went to the bank to cash it", he said. "The teller took it and disappeared from his cage. Then Mr. Parish, the president of the bank came out and asked me into his office. I sat down in a big leather chair.

'I am glad that you came to use with this transaction, Albert', he said. 'However, we do not normally handle deals of such magnitude.'

I thought he meant it was too small, so I said, 'Haven't you got a little guy who can do it?'

He shook his head. 'I think our biggest man should expedite this,' he said. Then he went out and brought back the tallest man in the place. The man shook hands with me and we all had a nice talk. Finally I got my dollar, a brand new one, and Mr. Parish saw me to the door.

'If you have any business in the future, I hope you will remember us', he said."



FOUR GENERATIONS OF THE PARISH FAMILY
On the right, W. W. Parish, Sr., one of the pioneer settlers of Momence; on the left, his son, W. W. Parish, Jr., founder and president of the Parish Bank. (It was he whom young Albert (Eddie) Condon remembered.) In the center, William Jr.'s son Varnum A. Sr. holding his infant son Varnum A. Jr. Varnum Sr. was State's Attorney for Kankakee County during Roosevelt's first term of office and attorney for the city of Momence for twenty years. His brother, Anthony, and a son, John, are still associated with the bank, and a daughter, Mary, practices law in Momence and is attorney for Momence township.

VI From the Model "T" to Apollo 17

Describing the Momence of those childhood days Condon said that there were Irish, Polish and French Canadians—and a lot of chickens. He might also have said that there were a lot of cars, for the automobile was no longer a curiosity. The heavier-than-air machine that could fly was capturing everyone's attention. There were fliers who went about the country exhibiting their planes in "death-defying" stunts. The Inter-state fair in Kankakee had one such demonstration in 1911.

In Momence there were two young men, John L. Brown (a grandson of the early settler, William) and Pat O'Brien who became seriously interested in flying. Pat learned to fly and joined the American Flying Corps when, in 1916 there was the possibility of war with Mexico. There was no actual fighting and he soon grew impatient with inaction. He went to Canada where he joined the Royal Flying Corps, trained for service in France and left for England and active duty in 1917. President Wilson was maintaining American neutrality, but the next year this was impossible; Congress declared war on Germany. Although many Momence men volunteered or were drafted and served heroically, no war story is quite so dramatic as that of Pat O'Brien. Soon after his service began he was shot down and taken prisoner. After his hospitalization and recovery in Germany, he managed to escape and find his way to Holland, and from there to England. He had an audience with King George and a hero's welcome on his return to Momence. The war ended before he could return to active duty. He wrote a book *Outwitting the Hun*, toured the country telling his story, married a movie actress and appeared in a movie. His suicide two years later was a shock to the country and unbelievable to his family in Momence. They insisted that he had been killed and one day the truth would be revealed. No further facts ever came to light, his death remained a mystery.

John Brown, who had also learned to fly, served during the war as a flying instructor at Rantoul. After the war he bought a World War I trainer and spent his time "barnstorming" at fairs and exhibitions, and giving airplane rides. He was one of the first to fly a Curtiss Jenny, flying it in exhibition at the 1933 Chicago World's Fair. Later he donated the plane to the Museum of Science and Industry.

When Oscar Conrad's son Henry returned from the war he went into the bakery business. During his school years and until Oscar retired he had worked in his father's bakery, learning the business well under that stern teacher. The building was empty when he returned to Momence in 1918. He borrowed money for equipment and supplies, went to all the stores getting orders, and he and his wife did all the work. Gradually the business grew and expanded giving employment to Momence people—many of them women. It was not uncommon to find women working in the stores, factories and businesses. They had taken men's places during the war and were proving to be capable workers. Cora Nichols who, before a serious illness had been a teacher in Momence, was, during the war and for a number of years after, a rural mail carrier. Lucy Brown remembered her making her rounds with a horse and buggy, then later by automobile.

By 1920 automobiles and airplanes were an accepted way of life, the motion picture was no longer a novelty and radio was the new curiosity. Mrs. Houde in *Of the People* says that Governor Len Small was one of the first county residents to take part in radio broadcasting. He gave a speech on the subject of good roads over the station WJAZ located at the Edgewater Hotel. This was in 1923; in 1921 the Dixie Highway was officially opened. There was a parade from Danville to Chicago led by the governor. When the parade reached Momence there were marshals on horseback to lead the parade through town, the streets were decorated, and between three and four hundred autos joined the procession to Chicago. The name of Range Street was changed to Dixie Highway and Front Street became Washington Street.

A headline of the *Press-Reporter* in June, 1924 read, "SATURDAY AND SUNDAY TRAFFIC HEAVIEST EVER". The article began, "Saturday and Sunday were probably the largest days in the history of Momence since the opening of the Dixie Highway". While much of the traffic was headed for the Indianapolis races, much was also headed for Momence. The article continued, "All of the resorts along the river entertained record breaking crowds. At Bob's Resort, the Log Cabins and other places every possible reservation was taken days in advance. At Island Park the number of visitors was one of the largest yet entertained. Many came for the two days and camping outfits were scattered over the entire park. Parking space along the river was at a premium and the river banks were lined with cars for miles . . . . . Some of the eating places report that Saturday was the largest day in the history of the city."

The ditching of the Kankakee river in Indiana

(finished in 1917) had closed the Indiana resorts; across the line in Momence township they were flourishing. Sam Gibeault's son Bill had built the Log Cabin Resort. The German Club was on the site of old Joe Barbee's Indian Town. The German Club, a private club, had been organized as a hunting lodge for Chicago businessmen in the 1890's. In the early 20's they sold the site to a land developer (it became the present Shadow Lawn) and moved to the north side of the river where it is today. In 1924 a new resort was opened, the Garden of Eden.

"There is no spot in all eastern Illinois more redolent of memories of frontier days than that spot known as the 'Metcalf Farm' situated one mile east of the present city of Momence on the Kankakee river. Here, in 1833, the first white settlement in eastern Illinois was started", wrote Bert Burroughs. Neil Metcalf, grandson of the pioneer settler, Silas, grew up at this spot, immersed in its history and with a great love for the river. He was particularly fond of the tales of Dan Parmelee, and remembered that old Dan had said of his spot on the river, "it's the most wonderful place in the world–it's a Garden of Eden". The old Parmelee farm was now owned by Vic Brassard. Neil Metcalf bought some 100 acres, built a golf course and laid out a resort subdivision. In memory of old Dan he called it the Garden of Eden. The year before he had laid out a subdivision just east of his home (next to the Anchor Club) naming it the Vincennes Trail subdivision; in 1932 he developed another, across the river, calling it the Lorraine subdivision. In his *Tales of an Old Border Town* Burroughs had further written, "Upper Crossing today is but a memory. It has faded completely from the face of the earth". In the margin of his well read copy Neil Metcalf had written, "Not so. In 1948 there are more homes at the Upper Crossing than when the town of Momence was here. On both sides of the river there is a home about every 50 feet–and I put them there".

The subdivisions of permanent homes near the Upper Crossing site remain today a part of the township. The resorts, including the Garden of Eden, no longer exist as they did in the 20's and 30's. However their names live, and there are, today, some permanent homes in those areas.

By the late 20's there were radios in many homes. Friends and neighbors gathered together with the fortunate radio owners to hear the election returns for Hoover in 1928. Some even remembered the McKinley election of 1896 when the office of the long distance telephone stayed open all night, and Mr. Lamport announced each bulletin as it came over the wire–to be relayed through town by someone in the waiting crowd. News of the 1929 Wall Street panic was also heard over radio before the newspaper headlines reported it. Hard times did not follow immediately, but by late 1930 the numbers of poor and jobless were mounting. By 1931 the depression was a main topic of conversation and the future looked bleak. Grain prices were very low; the farmer's situation was almost desperate. When President Roosevelt declared a "bank holiday" in 1933, the First National Bank was not able to reopen.

In spite of the depression a new business came to Momence in 1930. The Whole Grain Wheat Company moved into the plant at Seventh and Market, which had recently been a ladder factory, then, briefly, a typewriter assembly plant. The Whole Grain Wheat Company processed wheat in cans, producing a health food product. It failed almost immediately; the assets were sold and the company reopened under new management at the corner of Washington and Pine (the present Wille Implement Company).

When the Whole Grain Wheat Company moved to its new quarters, a garlic processing plant moved into the Market Street building. Shortlived, it left a residue of odor for several years. In 1933 word came into town that a new company was going to occupy the building. Harold Cromwell, just out of school and desperate for a job, waited day after day near the building for some officials to arrive. When they came he was waiting and introduced himself, asking for a job. His initiative was rewarded–he not only got a job, he was soon placed in a position of responsibility. That business was the Strongheart Products Company.

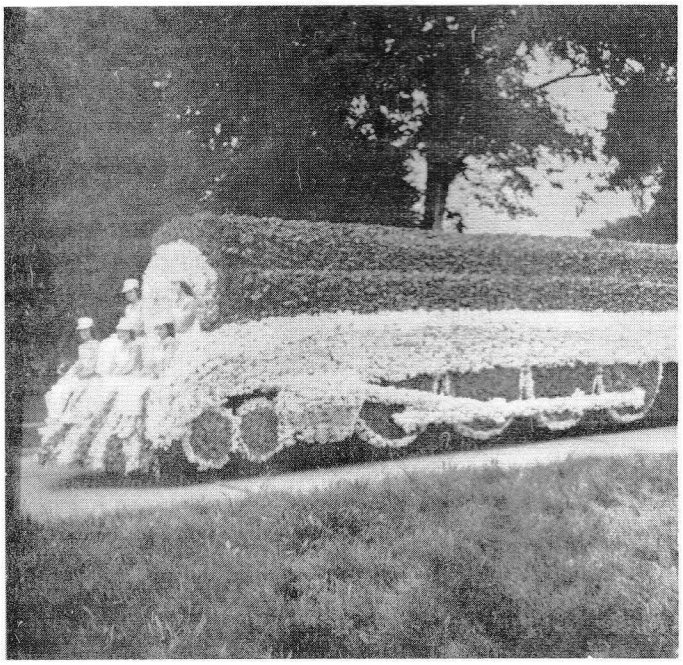
The new plants helped a little, but there were still many jobless. The Baptist Church started a "soup kitchen" to feed those unable to help themselves. The Kankakee county relief fund, under the direction of Lucy Brown (for Momence) set up a sewing project for those on relief. The women met daily in a building equipped with machines and teachers and were given material and patterns for whatever clothing they needed. Next there was a canning project, followed by an educational project teaching such skills as sewing, knitting, and furniture repair. The government, by 1935, was helping home owners and farmers with the Home Owners Loan Corporation, the Federal Emergency Relief Act and the Farm Mortgage Refinancing Act. The W P A continued the sewing project, paying the women for their work.

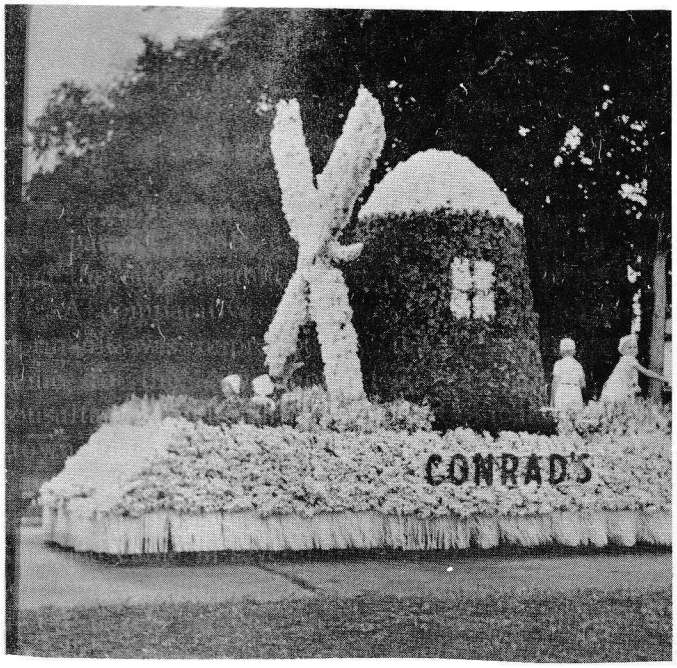
Another project was the building of a new school, the present high school on Franklin Street. Money was also appropriated for walling the north side of the river opposite the island and for renovating Island Park.

The Conrad bakery which had dominated the west end of the island for 15 years was closed. Henry Conrad and his wife were killed in an automobile accident November 10, 1933 and without Henry's able management the business went bankrupt. In 1935 the equipment was being auctioned. A retired Chicago baker, Edward Litoborski came to look it over, but was so pleased with the bakery and the town that he bought the business and settled in Momence. An able baker and manager, Edward, in partnership with his son and four daughters soon had a successful bakery although still operating under the name of Conrad.

The Chicago World's Fair of 1933, in which John Brown of Momence participated, was a bright interlude during the dark depression days. Another even brighter highlight was the Momence Centennial celebration in 1934. The entire town was decorated, a pageant was presented telling the story of the beginnings and the development of the city. There were parades, floats, a carnival atmosphere, and for a time the citizens almost forgot the great depression.

A comparative newcomer to Momence, E. O. Hermann was impressed by this pageant. He had come to the city about ten years earlier as a consultant for the Tiffany Brick Company. He had grown up in Boston Harbor, spending much of his time with his uncle, a tugboat captain. He was a graduate engineer from M I T but was very knowledgeable in several fields—metalurgy, ceramics, soil, steam engines and as avocations, art, music and literature. He had come to improve the quality of the enameling process of the brick. When his consulting work was finished he accepted the job of plant superintendant, bought the lovely W. G. Nichols house and he and his wife became active Momence residents. The Brick company benefited, too, from the Hermann's decision to stay. The White Castle Hamburger Company gave the Tiffany Enameled Brick Company the contract for the brick used in building all its "white castles". When the Coca Cola Company expanded and built bottling plants from New England to Georgia, it was Tiffany brick that was used.



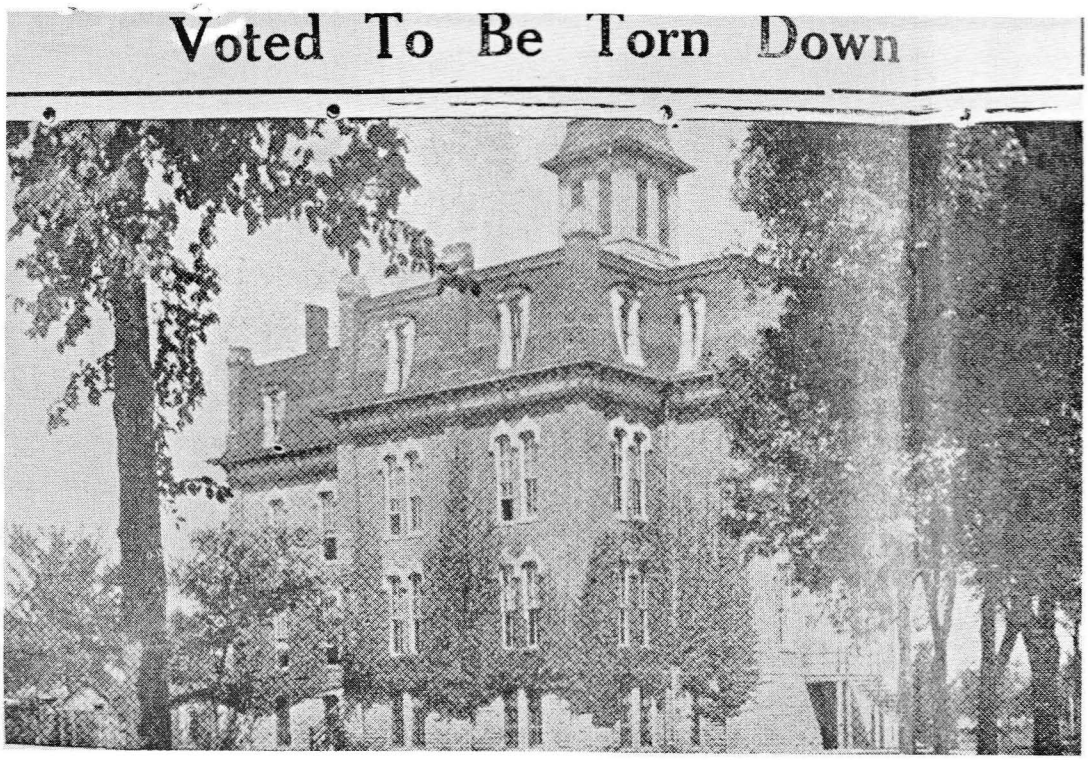


Elvin Butterfield photographs.

As economic conditions gradually improved, the idea of a continuing pageant or festival persisted. Together with the Chamber of Commerce and the leading business men a plan gradually evolved for a gladiolus festival to be held yearly. Not only would it be beautiful and colorful, bringing tourists and publicity to the area, it would honor the first Holland farmers who grew gladioli in this region. The plan was finalized and approved; the first Gladiolus Festival was held in August 1938 with Bessie Harris of Momence as festival queen. An economic and artistic success, the Festival has continued every year. At first floats were made entirely of flowers, today other materials are also allowed. Businesses and industries work for months on their exhibits, keeping their plans secret. One of the most memorable floats was that of the Gladiolus Growers Association in celebration of their fiftieth anniversary—a huge locomotive made entirely of flowers. The Conrad Bakery float, always beautiful and unusual had started a tradition which lasted until the Litoborskis sold the bakery. Hundreds of minature loaves of bread were made and tossed into the crowds by those on the float. A flower show, held at the high school has always been a part of the festival. Since 1952 four branches of the Armed Forces (Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines) have participated; since 1961 there has been an antique automobile show on the island as part of the festival.

It was the Momence photographer Elvin Butterfield who was instrumental in involving the Armed Forces in the festival. In 1945 he had been employed by the government as official photographer at the Aberdeen Proving Grounds in Aberdeen Maryland and had received a certificate of merit for his work. In the early 1950's, as a member of the Momence Squadron of the Civil Air Patrol, he was made a captain assigned to the Chicago Wing with a roving assignment in public relations. He served on the Festival Board and was offical photographer of every Festival from 1938 until his death in 1973. At his studio, opened in 1939, he was known for his portrait and commercial work, but he loved aerial photography and was an expert. When he was only sixteen he often rode with his good friend John L. Brown in his World War I trainer, taking aerial photos and developing an interest in this field of photography.

There had been three festivals and three years of good times in spite of distant rumblings of war in



From the Momence Press-Reporter, July 6, 1939. The article said, "On June 10, 1939, at a special election the proposition to tear down the old high school building was carried. . . . . For 68 years the old building with its belfry has been a familiar outline against the sky. It has known deep night and morning sun, rain and flying clouds. And now like so many other things that have been built, it has served its time."

Europe. 1940 had marked the registration for the first peace time draft in the history of the country. Sunday, December 7, 1941 was shattered by the news of the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor and the newspapers and radio announced on December 8 that Congress had declared war on Japan, a move that involved the United States in the European war as well. A single newspaper was now reporting the news in Momence. In 1940 the *Press-Reporter* and the *Progress* consolidated. The newspaper, combining names was called the *Momence Progress-Reporter*.

Momence men went to war; by early 1942 there were 57 in the service. Momence citizens saved scrap iron and cans, planted victory gardens, lined up for rationed goods and waited for news from their fighting men as did citizens everywhere. The shortage of cans shut down the Whole Grain Wheat Company in 1942. However, canning equipment was there, and a government project created through the school, with Harold Hungerford, the agriculture teacher as supervisor, was set up at the plant. People could bring in the produce from their gardens and, for a nominal fee, have them canned. The project lasted for two canning seasons, 1944 and 1945, and helped to alleviate the food shortage in the community. In 1943 the Tiffany Brick Company, a Momence industry for almost 60 years, ended its operation. There was no coal for the furnaces, there were not enough workers and the plant could not convert to war materials.

The war touched the lives of everyone. Yet, when it ended in 1945 there was not the wild excitement that had greeted the 1918 armistice. Undoubtedly dropping the atomic bombs on Japan had a quieting, sobering effect on Americans. Undoubtedly, too, the new news and entertainment medium, television, was influencing people's lives. Commercial broadcasting began in 1941 but the war and shortages of materials limited the manufacture of television sets. In 1946 both the broadcasting and the manufacture of television boomed. As more families acquired television sets and news and information programs improved, national and world events affected everyone. The Korean War (1950-1953) and the long Viet Nam War (1965-1973) came into people's living rooms; one did not just read of the assassinations of President Kennedy (1963) and of Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy (1968), one saw them on television. Earthquakes, floods and accidents as well as Sputnik I (the world's first artificial satellite) through the last Apollo moon landing in 1972 became a part of everyone's life. Television programming brought a new way of life as well as an awareness of style, customs and attitudes around the world.

In spite of television, day by day living continued and local happenings were as important as ever. In 1940, before the days of supermarkets there were 17 grocery stores in the city. Charles Spieth bought Peter Brouillette's grocery store at 533 Ash Street, a small two story building which he gradually improved and expanded. Ten years later he added a new section on the corner. After his son, Jim, finished school and military service he joined the business. His antique collection, gathered over a period of about twenty years, is displayed in the store for the enjoyment of the customers—a unique innovation in the grocery business. For the last ten years Charles has been designing and making the leaded lamps that hang in the store. While other grocery stores have come and gone Spieth's has remained, changing from grocery to supermarket, adding a parking facility when it was needed and offering a part-time work program for Momence High School students.

In 1953 the Carter-Wallace Company came to Momence, employing, at its peak, 300 people. Although inactive today as a factory, it is still a distribution center with some 15 employees, and the building with its beautiful grounds are well cared for. Also in 1953 the Momence City Hall and Fire Department were built. In 1961 the Agar Packing Company located in Momence, improving its economy but causing sewage disposal problems and a new sewage treatment plant was constructed. The Baker and Taylor Company, the oldest and largest book wholesaler in the United States, chose Momence for its midwest division and built a beautiful plant which, at present, employs about 400 people.

In 1962 the Litoborskis decided to retire and sold the bakery. The new owner, however, declared bankruptcy within six months and the property was bought by Merlin Karlock. He turned it into an apartment and store complex, the Island Mall. 1964 saw the new postoffice completed; the Junior High School was opened in 1965. The following year one of the city's landmarks, the old Lorraine School, was torn down. It had been considered unsafe for a number of years, but was patched and repaired and used for emergency service until the completion of the new Junior High School. Many former pupils watched the razing of the 72 year old school, some taking bits of brick or slate as souvenirs.

Momence Landmark Comes Down

Lorraine School, built in 1894 in Momence, was ordered razed this year by the Momence School District and the job was expected to be completed Saturday. The 70-year-old building, located on an acre lot on Gladiola Street, was the educational center for more than 8,000 Momence residents during its history. The school was named for Lorraine Beebe, Momence's first teacher. The building was ordered razed after state building inspectors condemned the structure. Supt. T. H. Bartholmew reports that plans for the lot are "indefinite." (Journal photo)

From the Kankakee Daily Journal, July 30, 1966.

It was also in 1966 that F. O. Orr bought Tabler's Lumber Company. B. F. Tabler had come to Momence and bought the J. E. Paradis Grain, Coal and Lumber business in 1890. The coal and lumber business was continued by his son, Clyde. About 1946 Mr. Orr had come to Momence and bought the Smith and Hobart Grain business. A former science teacher and coach, his success refutes the old saying that teachers make poor businessmen. Soon he bought the Beaverville Grain and Lumber Company and some years later, the Crete Lumber Yard. In 1966 he bought out Clyde Tabler, the second oldest continuing business in the city. (At that time Astle's Hardware business was 89 years old.)

In 1970, when the new Baptist Church on South Dixie Highway was completed, the old church building, completely renovated, became the new home of the Eastern Illinois Trust and Savings Bank.

The Momence Park District, a taxing body governed by a board of directors, was organized in 1966 by an ordinance of the city. Its major park is the Island Park whose buildings have been remodeled, tennis courts added and playground equipment improved. The park offers a complete recreational summer program for children and adults. The district also supervised the Walnut Street park and, in 1972 leased the Lorraine School lot for a park on the south side of the river.

The island improvement was equaled or even exceeded by the "facelifting" of the downtown shopping district during the last seven or eight years. Three Momence men—Les DuMontelle, Jr., store owner; Donald Zeglis, attorney; and Orville Sharkey, realtor—finding no downtown spot for a morning coffee break, took a good look at the business section. There were 40 business buildings downtown, almost half of which were empty, including the big three story corner hotel (former Central House) and two restaurants. Store fronts were dilapidated, sidewalks in bad repair, and, here and there, garish flashing neon signs. They became a committee of three, the Momence Downtown Development Committee, to bring the business area back to life. All businesses were assessed for sidewalk repair, businessmen or landlords were encouraged—even helped—to improve their store fronts. Mr. DuMontelle prepared inexpensive plans for facelifting the stores. The sidewalks were repaired. Those who couldn't remodel were encouraged to paint and clean. Most of the Washington Street stores availed themselves of the DuMontelle plans; on the Dixie Highway, the Hoosegow, with its several unique shops, is the work of Hugh Butterfield who also designed the exterior of Ray Schenk's corner, the Italian Village restaurant, Plaque Village, and, across the street, the Ross building and Elaine's restaurant. The flashing neon signs were eliminated, four free city parking lots established and landscape murals painted on the sides of buildings by high school art classes. Today every business building is being used, the result of enthusiasm and hard work by all the city's businessmen, but initiated by three men who saw the downtown shopping district dying and decided that it must revive and grow.

Across the street from the Hoosegow, between two business buildings is the William Graham house. A son of James Graham who came to Momence in 1838, he built the house in 1869. One hundred and four years later, in 1973, the house was turned over to the city to be used as a museum. It is controlled by a board of trustees appointed by the mayor and displays historical items related to the area.

In 1974 the Momence Guest Haven, a shelter care home for 62 patients was dedicated.

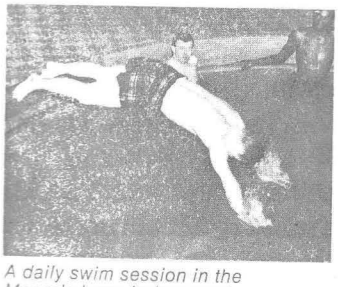
At the time of the downtown renovation a change was taking place in the township. St. Jude's Seminary with its imposing buildings and beautiful grounds had long been a landmark of which the township was proud. Low enrollment necessitated its closing at the time that the Little Brothers of the Good Shepherd were looking for a new facility. This is an American Order, founded in 1952 by Brother Mathias to care for the mentally retarded, the physically handicapped and the aged poor. In 1970 two brothers came to Momence to inspect the Seminary as a possible home for the mentally retarded and found it adequate. After completing the necessary financial and legal arrangements, in March 1972 the shelter care home was opened—a permanent residence for mentally retarded men 18 years old or older, under the care of seven Brothers. By the end of the year there were sixty residents, today it is filled (its capacity is 120) and there is a waiting list. The exterior of the buildings needed very little repair. The interior has been, and continues to be remodeled and redecorated. There are many small dormitories, each different and each reflecting the tastes of the occupants; there are class rooms and craft rooms; there is a gymnasium and a swimming pool; there is a beautiful chapel. The grounds are handsomely landscaped and well cared for. Momence citizens, at first uncomfortable with such a home, have come to appreciate the work of the Brothers, and many families have opened their homes to these

unfortunate but lovable boys and men. The Order now maintains 27 homes in America, Canada, England and Ireland. Next year they will celebrate their silver jubilee. The celebration at the Good Shepherd Manor will include many Momence people.

In Momence (city and township), in the year 1976, live fourth generation descendants of the earliest settlers, second and third generation descendants of later settlers, and first generation residents who have chosen this small portion of the Kankakee valley in which to live, work and raise their families. In spite of wide differences in heritage, they are friends and neighbors working together for the benefit of their community.

Many arts and crafts activities make each day a new experience, filled with interesting work and a sense of accomplishment.

Each man makes his own bed and helps in other ways to keep his home neat and attractive.



A daily swim session in the Manor's large indoor pool provides fun and healthy exercise. Some men have learned to swim competitively.

The Manor's large, beautiful chapel is open at all times for individual and group prayer, or just quiet meditation.

Kankakee Daily Journal photo of August 4, 1972, taken at the Kankakee County Fair on Senior Citizens' Day. Ed Chipman, 90 years old, the oldest citizen at the Fair, with his wife 84, are shown with their son Kenneth (at left), president of the Fair Association.
Ed Chipman was a successful farmer in Momence towhsip for 50 years before retiring in 1945. He is the son of Edward Chipman who came to Momence in 1846 and bought 80 acres of land in Momence township, a farm which, in time, grew to 1500 acres and extended into Ganeer, Yellowhead and Sumner townships. In 1904 he became president of the First National Bank of Momence; in 1912 he gave the city its public library. His son, Ed Chipman of the photo, is now 94, his wife 88, and still active and healthy.

VII From THE-A-KI-KI to Kankakee

The Kankakee river winds its way across the center of Momence township from its eastern boundary to its western boundary; the story of the river is thus an integral part of the story of the township. John Klasey says, "It begins–small, twisting and hardly big enough to be honestly called a creek–in a marshy spot near South Bend, Indiana". Father Hennepin, who traveled with de La Salle, recorded that the headwaters of the Kankakee were so marshy that, had there been no frost in the ground when they made the portage from the St. Joseph to this stream, they would have had much difficulty in landing their canoes and finding camping sites. The stream they descended was, for some 250 miles a sluggish maze of meanders, ox-bow lakes and sloughs winding among marshes and marshy islands with here and there sandy dunes. It was the river of two thousand bends until, just above Momence, it encountered a limestone outcropping, a sort of natural dam. After this the gradient increased, the river flowed more swiftly through great expanses of prairie grasses bordered on both sides by a belt of timber.

The Pottowatomi Indians who lived along this river accepted the land as they found it. The Indiana portion, known as the Great Marsh, was a spawning ground for fish and a nesting area for water fowl. It was where the Indians made their winter camps, for hunting and trapping. Summer camps were usually away from the marsh, on higher ground, where crops were grown, although sometimes they would travel in families to the fur trading posts at Chicago and stay along the lake front during the summer.

The earliest white men, hunters and trappers, also spent their winters in the swamp. They built shacks on the sandy knolls and trapped all winter, catching beaver, otter, mink and muskrat. In the spring they stored their traps in the shanty and headed for the fur trading posts. Some of them occasionally hired out to the pioneer farmer during the summer months; the pioneer farmer who also found the great marsh a source of food and income. He too became a trapper during the winter months. A. S. Vail recalled that during the winter of '51 he gathered $13,000 worth of furs. In the fall the farmer joined the professional hunters, for wagon loads of wild duck and goose were shipped to the markets in Chicago. Billy Brassard used to tell of the hunting prowess of his father, Peter Brassard. Peter and his good friend Frank Longpre (both excellent farmers) worked together in the fall to bring in unbelievable numbers of wild fowl. They were a real team, Frank honking to call the birds, Peter shooting–sometimes three or four at a single shot! For such a hunter the marsh was a source of pleasure as well as profit.

The Pottowatomi had found in the marshes, this maze of water and land forms, an excellent refuge from the fierce Iroquois to the east. Later, these same marshes hid the gambler, horse-thief and counterfeiter. Every island, every water form had a name, a revelation of its history: Goose Island, Skunk Island, Shanty Island, Bogus Island, Flag Pond, Wildcat Swamp, Frenchman's Slough, and, just west of the state line, in Momence township, an oxbow known as "The Skillet".

Indians, the earliest human occupants of the land, followed by hunters, trappers, the first pioneer farmers, even criminals–all had adapted their lives to their environment, using it as they found it. Around 1880 all but the farmer had left; towns were developing at the edges of the swamp, the great marsh was beginning to change as its occupants began to alter the land to suit their needs.

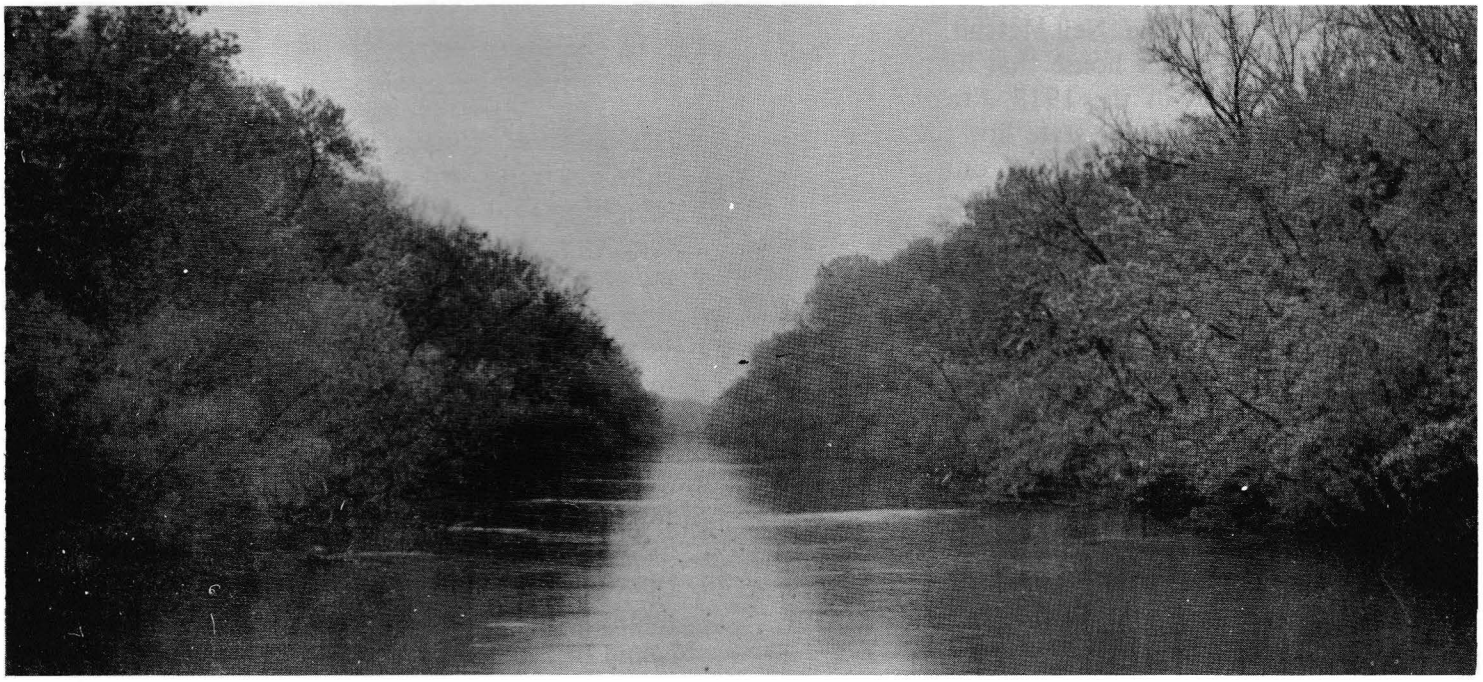
The development of the railroad made the marsh accessible not only to settlers but to sports enthusiasts. Its fame as a "hunter's paradise" spread; by the middle 1880's sportsmen's clubs from Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Washington and Chicago had erected expensive hunting lodges; the wealthy sportsmen returned time and again to this wonderland. The pioneer farmer and river town resident did not object; these recreational sites were profitable. The lodges and hotels (some built by Indianans) needed workers, food and pushers who served also as guides in the swamp. The "pusher" sat in the rear of the boat, propelling it forward with a long push paddle. He knew this maze, he would not get lost. He was the farmer or river man who still hunted in the fall and trapped in the winter.

A hunter taking his load of geese and ducks to market.
(An original sketch by Marilyn Ostrow)

Now a new profit could be made in the marsh; the wild sedges and marsh grasses could be sold. By late summer they were ready for cutting—the shorter, more tender grasses for feed, the longer, coarser, tougher varieties for bedding or packing hay. The hay was baled with huge steam presses and exported, principally to Chicago.

These marsh-hay pastures were also seen as excellent cattle grazing lands. In the early 1880's Nels Morris, a Chicago packer, bought some 23,000 acres of Indiana swamp and brought in thousands of head of Texas cattle. He was followed by other "cattle barons", all of whom soon wanted the land "reclaimed" in order to be suitable all year for grazing, and for raising grain as well as pasture grass. The pioneer farmers had done some ditching, at first by hand, then by horse or oxen. The invention of the steam dredge in 1884 made ditching and drainage a real possiblility. With this new land-moving machine, deep, wide drainage ditches were dug, leading into the river. They were only partly successful, however, in draining the swamp; it was decided that the rock outcropping above Momence, the natural dam, must be removed. In 1893 the Indiana government undertook this project. Starting just east of Island Park the digging began, with the use of coffer dams, a few feet at a time. When they had reached a spot a little above the Metcalf farm they ran out of money. The workmen left without removing the last coffer dam; gradually it fell apart, the stones creating what is still today called "the riffles". The rock ledge had been lowered about two and a half feet but swamp drainage was still not complete. The drainage ditches into the river had been extended farther and farther into the swamp with little success. There was nothing left but to attack the river itself. The straightening and ditching began near the headwaters (1906); by 1917 it went all the way to the state line—250 miles of meander, slough and bayou had been deepened and straightened to only 90 miles in length. For the "land hungry" cattlemen the project was a success; the swamps drained! For the naturalist it was a disaster, a massacre! The project was finished in early spring, during the nesting season. Millions of newly-hatched ducklings and goslings died for lack of water; heaps of dead fish covered the mud of dried-up bayous and sloughs; beaver, otter and muskrat perished; the odor of decaying flesh was unbearable—even 40 miles away. Bert Burroughs recorded the words of an old river man who had seen and smelled the disaster. "They murdered the land while they were at it, and made a good job of it", he said.

In his study of the Kankakee marsh, Alfred Meyer says that the straightened, deepened and widened channel flanked by high spoil banks offered nothing in the way of river sport or scenery. Klasey describes the Indiana ditch, "For mile upon monotonous mile it flows arrow-straight between the walls of a ditch, a victim of land-hungry man's decision that corn rather that fish and fowl and the



Kankakee Daily Journal photo. The Kankakee river in Indiana—known as the Kankakee ditch.

wild grape should grow in its valley". The hunters' paradise was gone; the lodges and hotels stood empty. Today only remnants remain of the expensive lodges used by presidents Cleveland and Theodore Roosevelt and by European nobility.

Indiana was satisfied but Illinois soon discovered that this tampering with nature was affecting its share of the river. The meandering Kankakee with its bayous, sloughs and holding basins was nature's way of preserving the river's purity and its aquatic life. The swiftly moving current of the ditch carried (and still carries) great quantities of sand down river. As early as the middle 1920's this sand was filling in the bayous of the swamp edge in Illinois and was creating sandbars west of Momence. Meyer's study of the river in 1935 discusses the sand and its destructive influence on fish and vegetation; its creation of an unstable river bottom. Lee Snapp, a Momence riverman remembers, as a boy, the spawning grounds of bass at the rock outcropping just above Momence. It is now sand covered; the bass no longer spawn there. The river that once was the third cleanest water in the state is now only the sixth cleanest.

The natural dam above Momence, while no longer a spawning ground for bass, still exists to protect the Illinois Kankakee. Without this "stopper" the sand and silt from Indiana would come faster and farther, destroying more rapidly the fish and vegetation, causing even more serious flooding during the spring high water season. A boon to Illinois, the rock ledge is still a menace to Indiana, whose government has made repeated attempts to have it removed. In a 1935 article, Neil Metcalf, living at the Upper Crossing site in the house that his grandfather Silas had built, wrote of the 1917 ditching, "When the dredge boats reached the state line the river men said NO. The long guns were dug out, and NO it was". Metcalf, a river expert and an active conservationist, spearheaded the organization of the Kankakee River Preservation Association, made up of farmers and river men, with headquarters in Momence. Indiana was again trying to gain the right to dredge the river from the state line to Momence. The people of the township were concerned; there were meetings in the town hall, the high school, the churches; there were meetings in Chicago and Indiana. Finally, the verdict was no; the dredging was not done. Leo Pachner, one of the co-"fighters", now the successful publisher of *Farm, Pond, Harvest* magazine, recalled that controversy. He said that the Illinois victory was due to Neil Metcalf, a "real fighter".

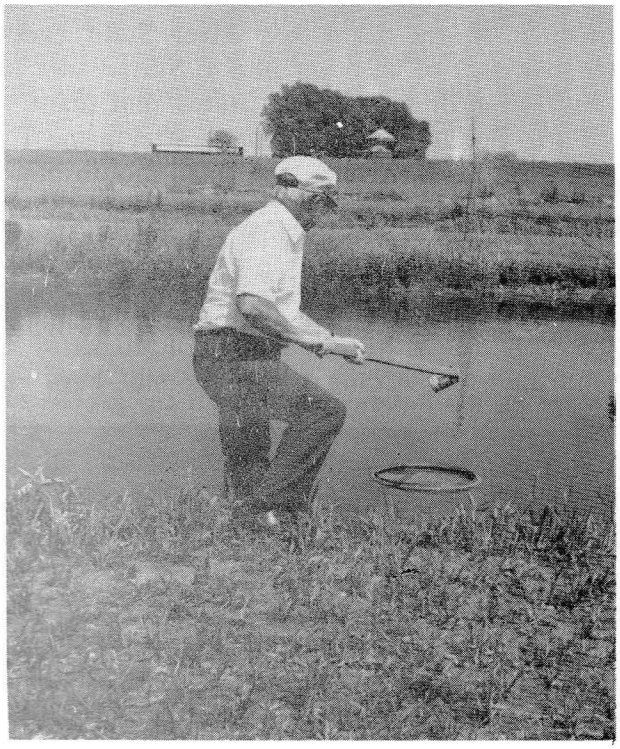
The Kankakee River Preservation Association had no real power. In 1955 Metcalf and the Association, with the aid of attorney Varnum Parish, were instrumental in the formation of the Momence Conservancy District, the first of its kind in Illinois. It is a taxing body with power to do whatever is necessary for the protection of the river, and is governed by a board of trustees chosen by the County Board of Supervisors. The first board—Neil Metcalf, Van Snow, Frank Siwicki, Leonard Brooks and Leo Pachner set their goals. With a sand sucker they would clean out the back bayous and the main channel, they would clear out obstructions in the main channel making it safer for boats, they would protect the rock ledge.

Lack of interest on the part of local and state government as well as lack of funds have made it impossible to achieve all those goals and the first, clearing out the sand, was abandoned. The present board—Gerald Mitchell, Richard Demack, Frank Siwicki, Veryl Graves and Secretary Eugene Rudecki are all men who have lived on the river for most of their lives and are dedicated to river conservation. Without pay they are always available for river emergencies, they keep the channel free of obstructions, they inspect all boats for safety equipment. They aid the river patrol and they aid those families stranded during flood times.

The Conservancy District has tried and is still trying to have the state or the Conservation Department limit the amount of water going into the river from the ditches at flood times. It is, as always, a protector of that 14 miles of river from the state line to Momence.

The Illinois Kankakee is not a ditch. John Klasey says, "Finally in Illinois the Kankakee river comes into its own: a broad, lazy stream swinging in a long loop southward, then, with added strength from the Iroquois, sharply to the north. Miles later it blends its flood with the Des Plaines and becomes the river called Illinois".

Gordon Graves, river expert, aquatic biologist, hydrographer, member of the governor's Wildlife Commission, reports that there are, today, on our Illinois Kankakee, nesting and resting areas for waterfowl; that there is habitant for many fur-bearing animals; that it is still clean enough to be the source of water for the cities of Kankakee, Bradley and Bourbonnais; that a beautiful flower of the mallow family, called the Kankakee mallow grows on an island in the lower reaches of the river. It is called the Kankakee mallow because that island is the only



Leo Pachner supervising the excavation, in 1975, for his experimental ponds (upper left). The ponds a year later (upper right). A group of children showing off their catch (lower left).

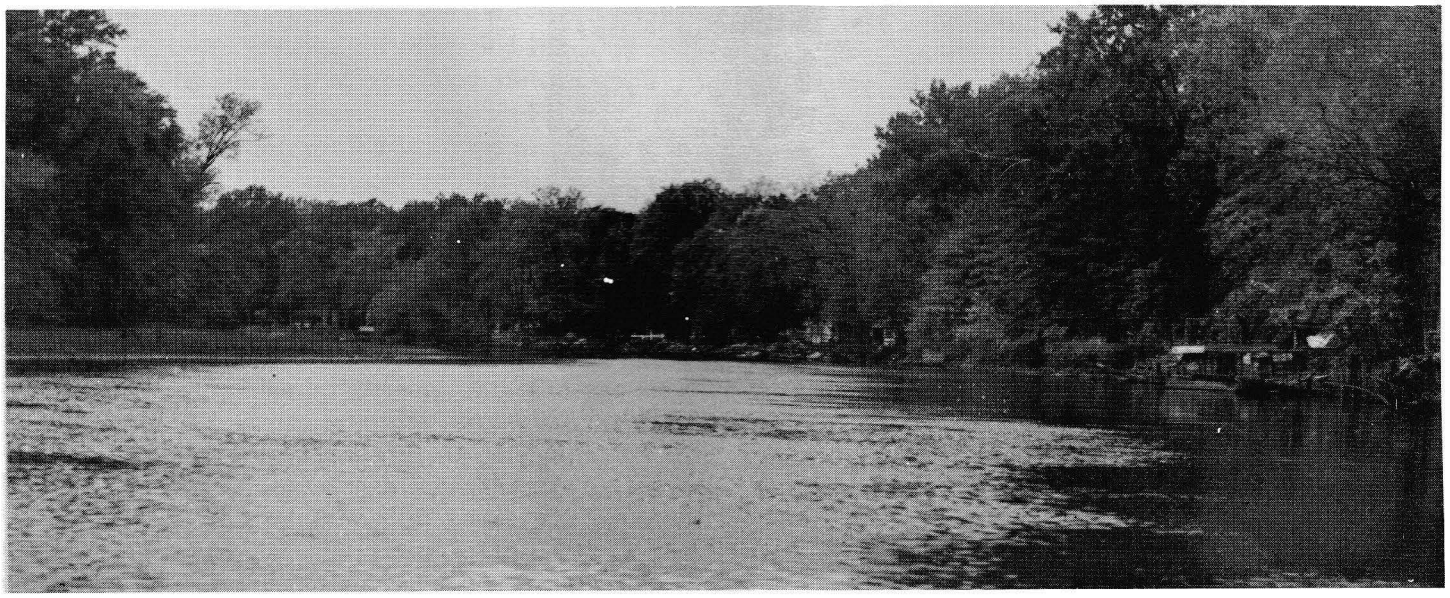
Mr. Pachner's first pond was built in the 1940's and stocked with bass and bluegills for testing lures in connection with his fishing tackle manufacturing business. After disposing of the business he worked with children taking them fishing at various ponds in the area. Amazed by the lack of information or misinformation concerning pond development and management, in 1967 he started a magazine to supply lacking information and to correct misinformation. Each year he still takes groups of children fishing. He is the founder and director of Sport Fish Institute, a national organization, and is a member of the Fishing Hall of Fame in recognition for his work with farm ponds.

place it has been found to grow. It is on "our" river that the Midwest Speedboat races are held. Attendance at the Kankakee River State Park is higher than that of all other Illinois State Parks. It is the only river in the United States that holds the record for the three most sought after game fish: walleye pike, northern pike and small mouth bass. It is a recreationist's dream.

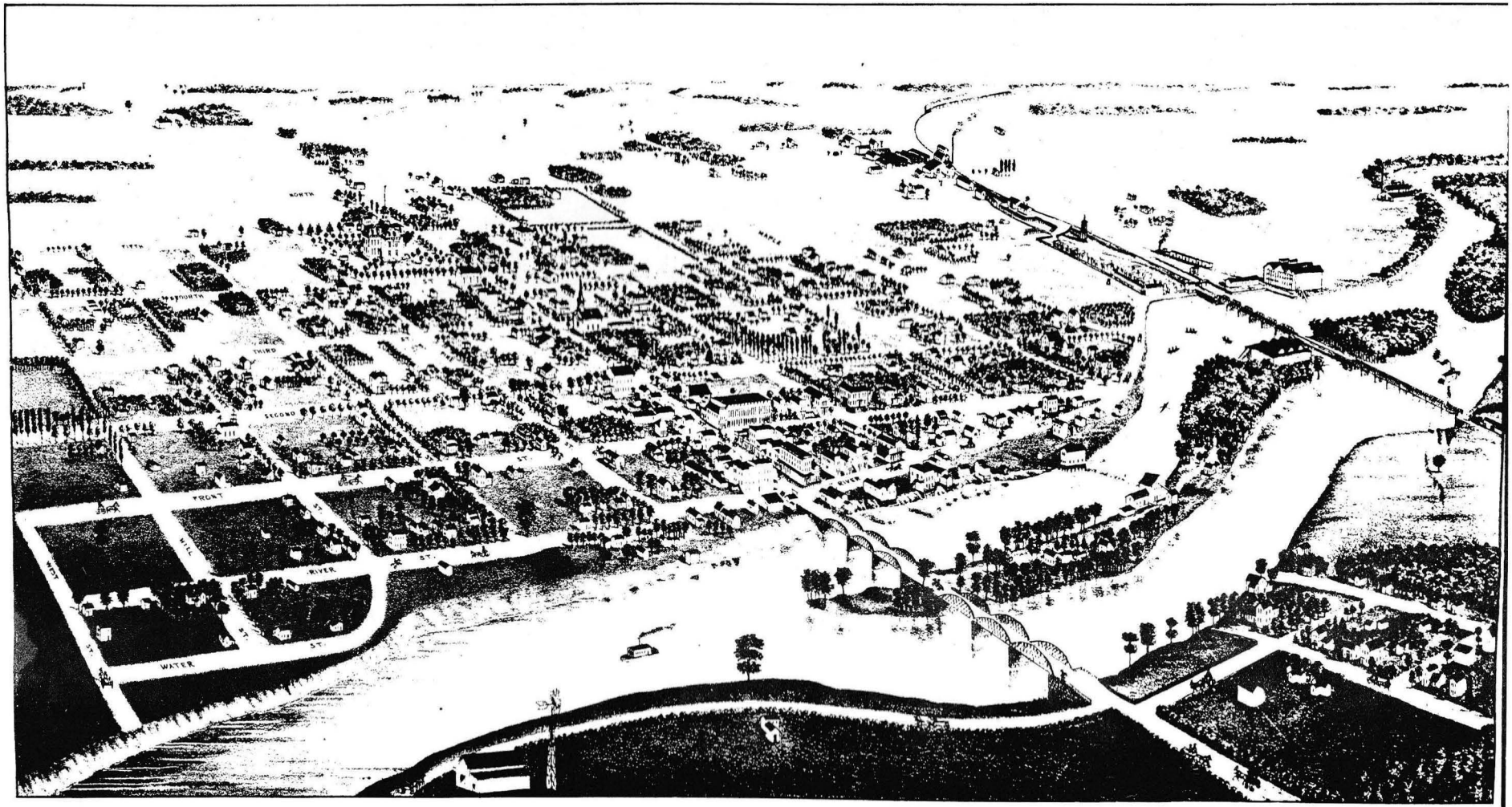
The Chicago Tribune in March 19, 1976 has a headline, "The Kankakee is a good place to fish". The article says that a twelve pound nine ounce walleye was recently caught by Dee Millsap of Momence, and that northerns exceeding fifteen pounds have been caught on many occasions. The best small mouth bass ever registered in the state came from the Kankakee.

Gordon Graves warns that Indiana has a new study underway to ditch the river up to Momence. He warns, too, that the sand, tons of which enter our stream daily, is as deadly a pollutant as municipal and industrial pollution. It is his hope that the technology that has brought affluence and abundance to Americans will be used to improve our river—a God-given treasure to be enjoyed but not abused. The "Wonderful river The-a-ki-ki" is also a symbol—so long as it flows pure and undefiled, so long will its communities prosper.

1907—A picnic on the bank of the river, just above Momence.

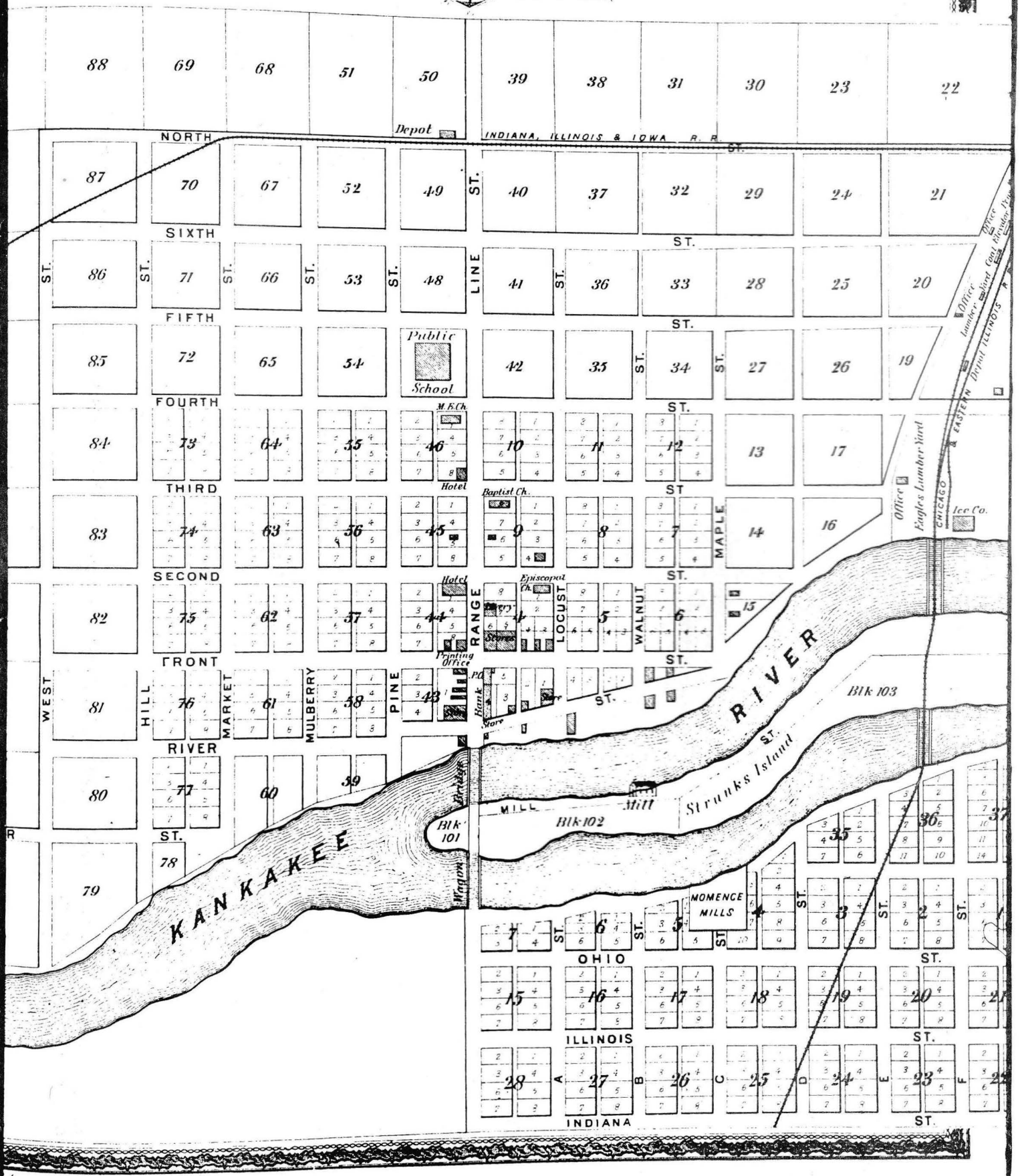


The Kankakee river of Illinois with farms, homes and cottages along its banks. (Journal photo)



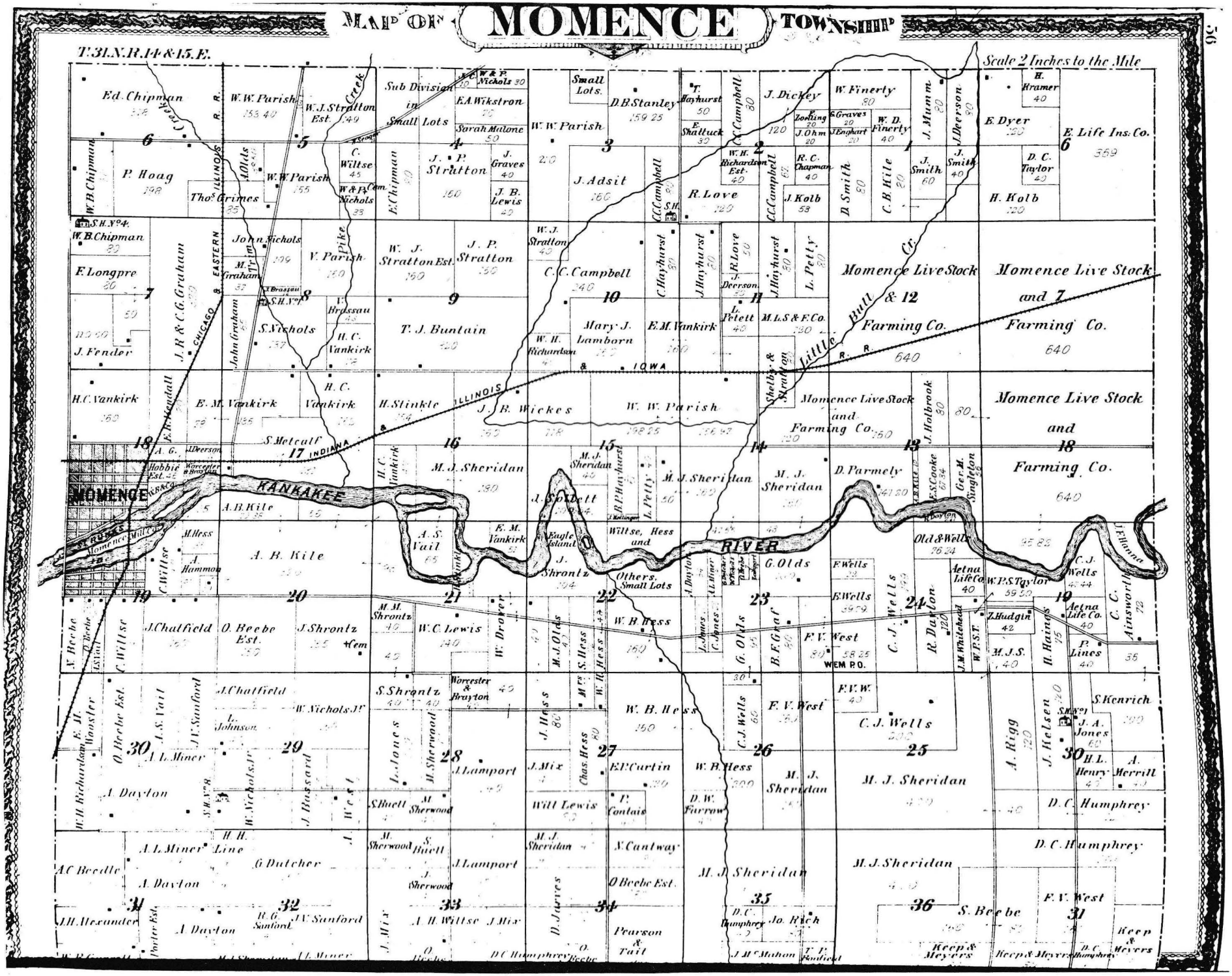
The aerial style drawing of the Momence of 1880 and the map of the city from the 1883 Atlas show its growth south and west in the thirty years since its first platting.

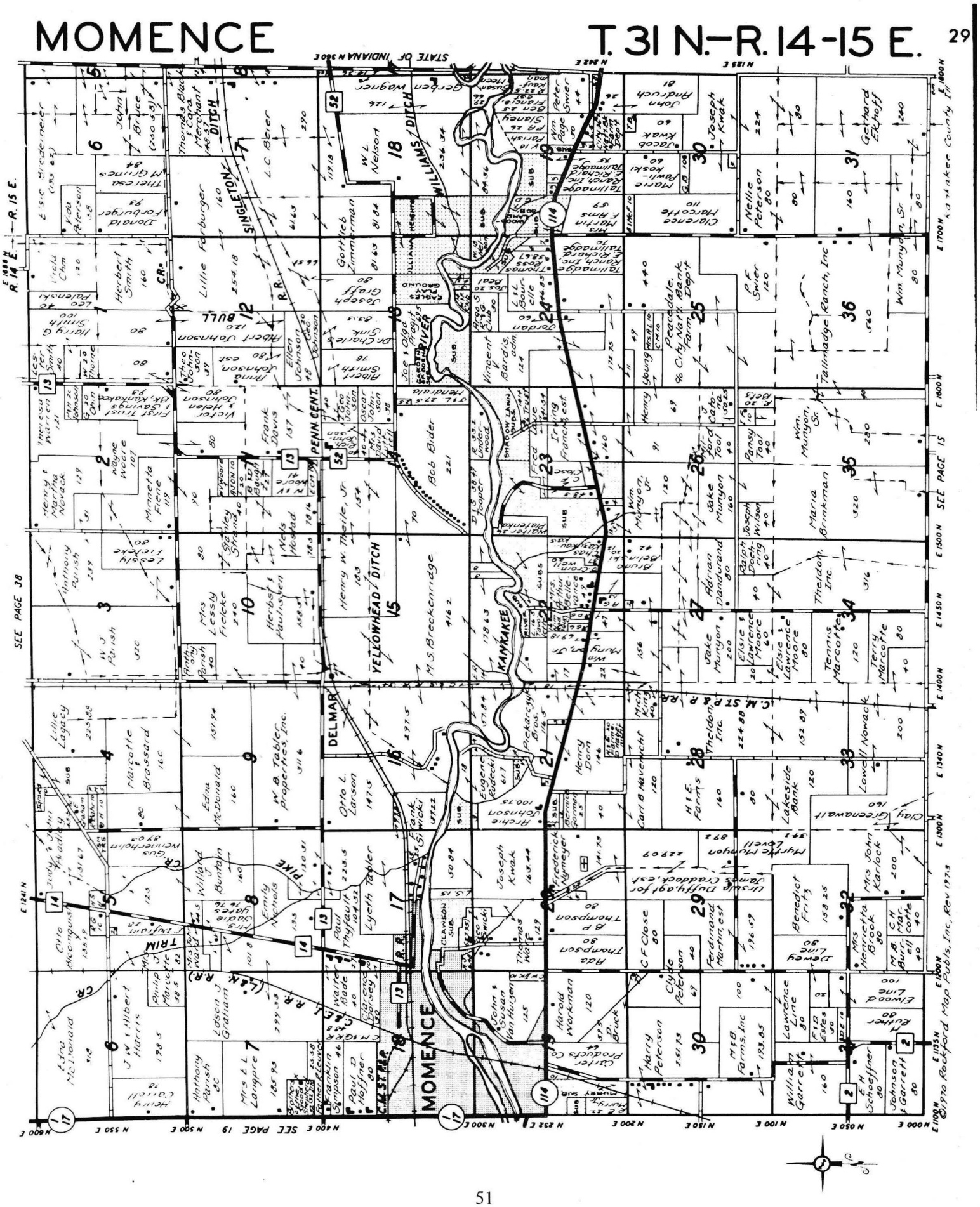
MOMENCE


NORTH
INDIANA, ILLINOIS & IOWA R. R.
Depot
Public School
M.E.Ch.
Hotel
Baptist Ch.
Episcopal Ch.
Printing Office
P.O.
Bank
Store
Office
Eagles Lumber Yard
CHICAGO & EASTERN Depot ILLINOIS
Ice Co.
Office
Lumber Yard
Coal
Elevator
Pump
SIXTH
FIFTH
FOURTH
THIRD
SECOND
FRONT
RIVER
ST.
WEST
HILL
MARKET
MULBERRY
PINE
LINE
RANGE
LOCUST
WALNUT
MAPLE
KANKAKEE
RIVER
Bridge
Wagon
Blk 101
Blk 102
Blk 103
MILL
Mill
Strauks Island
MOMENCE MILLS
OHIO
ILLINOIS
INDIANA
A
B
C
D
E
F

An Elvin Butterfield aerial photograph of Momence taken in 1970.

A comparison of the township map of 1883, page 50 with the map of 1973, page 51 shows the changes in the size of the city, the added subdivisions along the river, changes in the course of the river as well as changes in farm size and ownership.


MAP OF MOMENCE TOWNSHIP
T. 31. N. R. 14 & 15. E.
Scale 2 Inches to the Mile
MOMENCE
KANKAKEE RIVER
Momence Live Stock and Farming Co. 640
Momence Live Stock and Farming Co. 640
Momence Live Stock and Farming Co. 640
Momence Live Stock and Farming Co.
Momence Live Stock and Farming Co.
Momence Live Stock and Farming Co.
Little Bull Cr.
Coal Creek
Spike Creek
CHICAGO & EASTERN ILLINOIS R. R.
ILLINOIS & IOWA R. R.
INDIANA & ILLINOIS R. R.
WEM P.O.
Ed. Chipman
W. W. Parish
W. J. Stratton Est.
Sub Division in Small Lots
Small Lots.
D. B. Stanley
T. Hayhurst
J. Dickey
W. Finerty
E. Dyer
E. Life Ins. Co.
P. Hoag
Thos. Grimes
J. P. Stratton
J. Adsit
R. Love
J. Kolb
H. Kolb
W. B. Chipman
F. Longpre
J. Fender
John Nichols
V. Parish
W. J. Stratton Est.
C. C. Campbell
Mary J. Lamborn
E. M. Vankirk
T. J. Buntain
J. B. Wickes
H. C. Vankirk
H. Stinkle
M. J. Sheridan
A. B. Kile
A. S. Vail
E. M. Vankirk
Eagle Island
J. Shrontz
Others. Small Lots
G. Olds
D. Parmely
Old & Wells
Aetna Life Co.
C. J. Wells
J. Chatfield
O. Beebe Est.
W. C. Lewis
W. B. Hess
F. V. West
R. Dayton
P. Lines
A. L. Miner
A. Dayton
J. Lamport
J. Mix
Will Lewis
E. P. Curtin
D. W. Farrow
M. J. Sheridan
A. Rigg
J. Helsen
D. C. Humphrey
A. C. Beedle
G. Dutcher
J. H. Alexander
S. Beebe
Keep & Meyers


MOMENCE
T. 31 N.—R. 14-15 E.
29
STATE OF INDIANA N 300 E
R. 14 E.
R. 15 E.
SINGLETON DITCH
WILLIAMS DITCH
YELLOWHEAD DITCH
KANKAKEE RIVER
PENN CENT. R.R.
DELMAR
TRIM
PIKE
BULL
MOMENCE
SEE PAGE 38
SEE PAGE 15
SEE PAGE 19
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Kankakee County, Ill.

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